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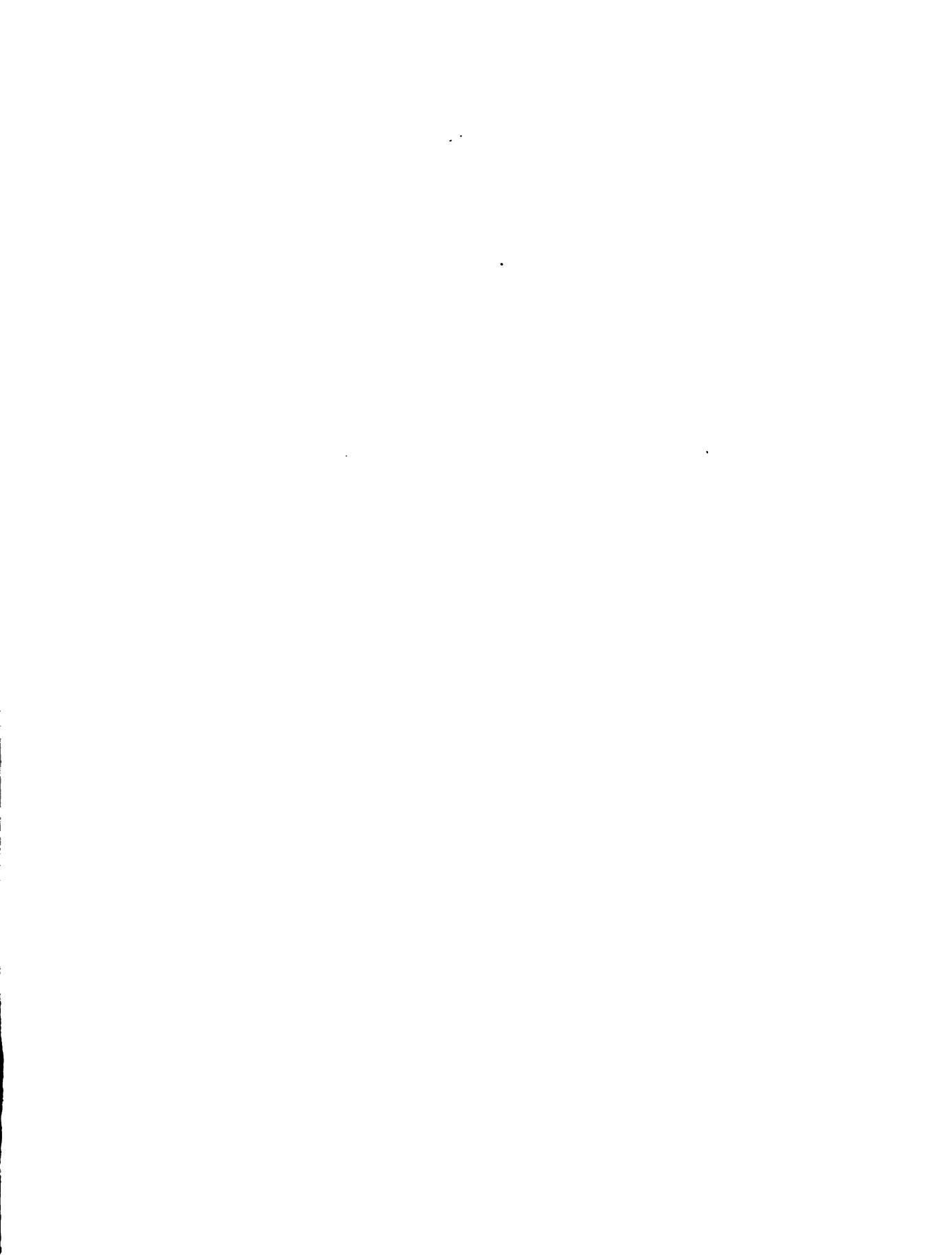


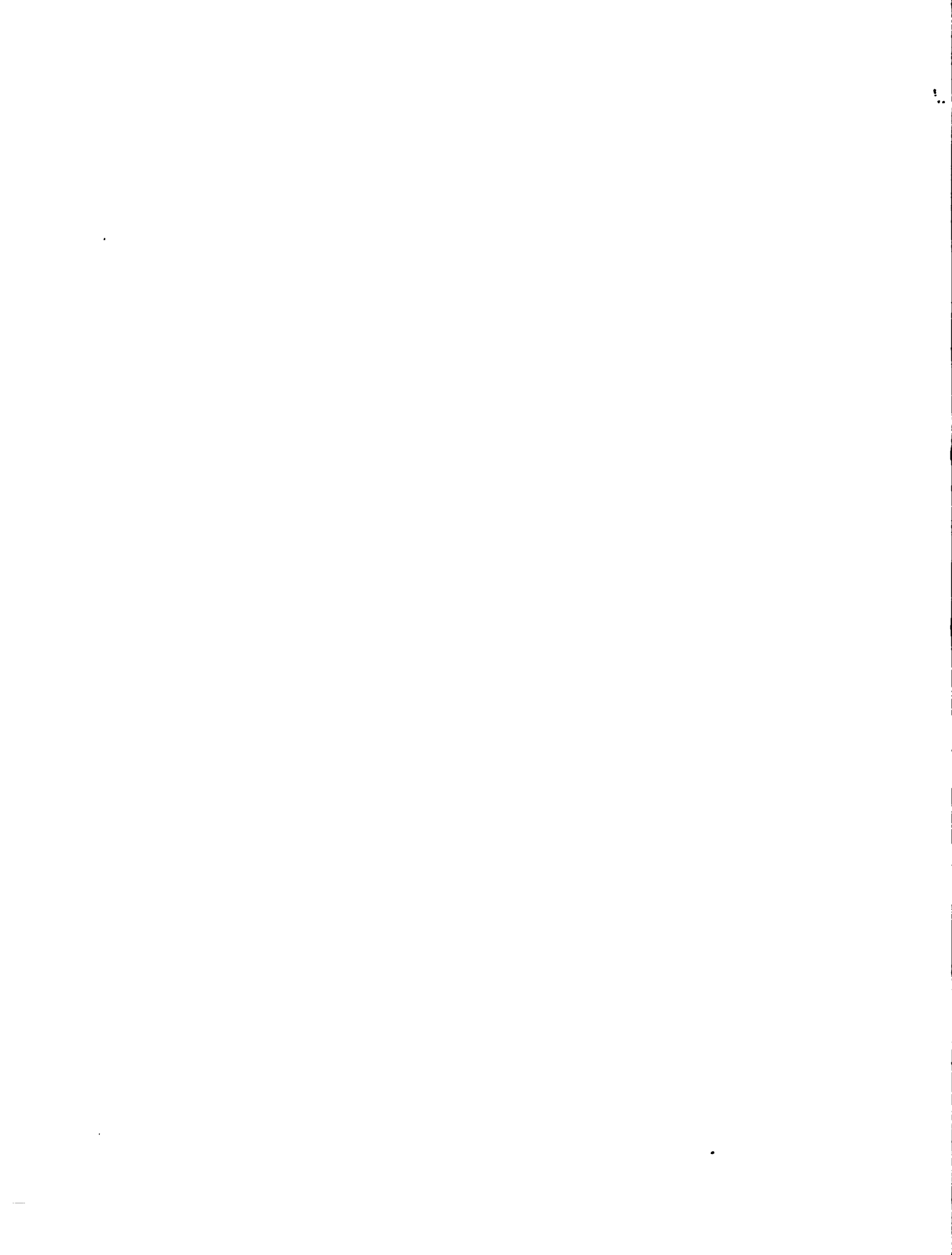
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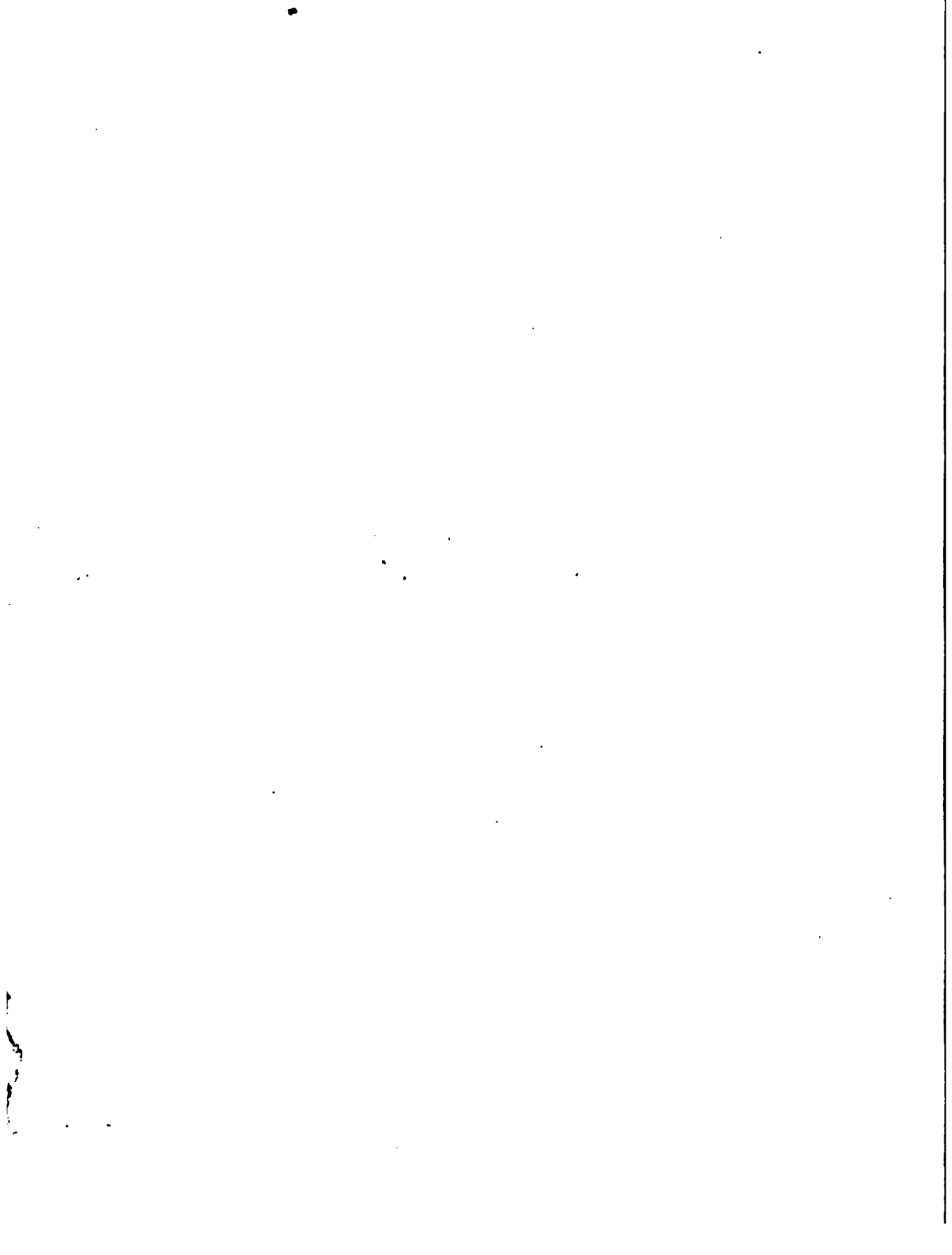
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GEORGE NICHOLS  
Class of 1828

FOR ENGLISH LITERATURE





**THE TEST OF GUILT.**



THE  
**TEST OF GUILT;**

OR

TRAITS

OF

**Antient Superstition.**

A

DRAMATIC TALE.

---

BY THE LATE MR. JOSEPH STRUTT,

AUTHOR OF

THE REGAL AND ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY OF ENGLAND; MORDA ANGEL-CYNNAN,  
OR MANNERS AND CUSTOMS OF THE ENGLISH; CHRONICLE OF ENGLAND;  
DICTIONARY OF ENGRAVERS; DRESSES AND HABITS OF THE ENGLISH; AND  
GLIG-GAMENA ANGEL-THEOD, OR SPORTS AND PASTIMES OF THE ENGLISH.

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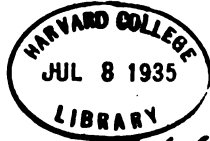
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*George Nicholls fund*

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## P R E F A C E.

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**F**ROM a large collection of unpublished writings of the late Mr. *Joseph Strutt*, my honoured Parent, I select this little dramatic Tale, intitled the **TEST OF GUILT**, for the inspection and approbation of the Public, who are already in possession of several extensive Works from his pen; trusting that it will not be found unworthy to rank among his former larger productions; and hoping that it may at least excite the interest of the Reader.

Mr. *Strutt's* literary labours have been almost exclusively devoted to the investigation and elucidation of the Antient Records and Documents relative to his native Country: and in these researches, he has been aided by the guidance of truths, though hidden, yet treasured up in the volume of Antiquity, and thence deducible. — In this little Tale, the genius of the Author has had its full scope; nor has he consulted any other record, than his own genuine feelings, which are here faithfully transcribed.

To speak separately of the characters incidental to the Tale, would be needless.—We contemplate, in the respective parts assigned to them, the means by which, vice, though a while triumphing, is at last brought to condign punishment; we behold how innocence, though traduced and led into the most imminent peril, eventually surmounts all difficulties, and rises with superior dignity, after a momentary depression: And the grand theorem that is laid down and established, throughout the narrative, is this:—

“ That, though the ways of Providence are dark and inscrutable to our weak judgements, and oftentimes irksome to us ; yet that, by the very means we disdain and think most unlikely, our good is often worked, and justice brought to punish the guilty and free the innocent ; the mouth of presumptuous complaint is closed ; and Heaven’s dealings with mankind, however we may regard them, are always just.”

Concerning the plot, or leading incident in the Tale, whether it be borrowed from the record of history, whether it be a story of credence in some country village, or altogether an invention of the Author, I cannot determine.

Had Mr. *Strutt*’s life been spared, he would doubtless have made some improvements in this piece : for, it never underwent a revised transcript from his pen : In its present state, however, it may be found not entirely deficient in merit. Every endeavour has been used to render it as accurate as possible ; and it is hoped that, in the few instances where corrections or alterations have been made, through occasional deficiencies in the Author’s writing, his meaning has not been misconceived.

Relying on the candour of a liberal and discerning Public, who have honoured my Father’s several works with their approbation, I venture to claim their patronage for this little Tale also, the production of his hours of relaxation from the severer studies of the Antiquary, and the closer application of his talents as an Artist ;

trusting, that it will not be judged with too harsh a censure. — I may mention in this place, that some farther remarks respecting the present publication, will be given in a Work that will shortly appear before the Public, intitled “ An Account of the Life and Writings of the late Mr. *Joseph Strutt* ;” wherein his several published and unpublished writings will be particularly noticed ; with an analytical and critical statement of the whole. — The intent of this publication will be to convey to the world some authentic particulars relative to the Life of the Author ; of whom a correct Portrait has been engraved by his eldest pupil, Mr. John Ogborne, from a picture in crayons by Ozias Humphry, Esquire: the engraving is in strokes, and finished in a style of superior excellence, and will be prefixed to this future work ; which is in the press, and will be produced as speedily as possible. — The portrait may be seen by applying to the Proprietors and Publishers, Messrs. APPLEYARD, Wimpole-Street ; to whom those gentlemen who are desirous of having copies on an extra-paper, with proof impressions of the Plates, are requested to make immediate application, that they may insure the same, as very few will be printed.

With gratitude to the Public, and to the several Friends of my Father, who have honoured his Works with their perusal, and have testified their approbation of them ; I subscribe myself

Their obliged humble servant,

*Baleman's Buildings,  
Soho Square*

JOSEPH STRUTT.

---

*Persons incidental to the Tale.*

THE BARON.

HENRY FITZHUGH.		OSBORNE.
BENEDICT.		ABSALOM.
NICHOLAS.		GRIM.

LANCELOT.

GREGORY.		JOHN THE SMITH.		PERKIN.
RALPH THE HIND.		DICK THE BAKER.		PHYSICIAN.
PIERCE THE PLOUGHMAN.		TOM THE HEDGER.		PORTER.

ELEANOR.

MATILDA.	JENNY.
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THE  
**Test of Guilt.**

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THE FIRST PART.

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A NIGHT-SCENE; REPRESENTING A CHURCH-YARD:—ON ONE SIDE OF IT, A GARDEN-WALL, WITH AN ENTRANCE; AND ON THE OTHER SIDE, A BROKEN TABLE-TOMB.

*Grim.*

GRIM.

**W**ELL then, at length 'tis done! and she is dead!  
These blood-stain'd hands cry — Murder! and this knife,  
Weeps as it were with blood, warm from her heart! — —  
Did she not love me well, dog that I am? —  
And while her life was oozing from the wounds,  
In Christian charity she pray'd for me, —  
For me her murderer! — — Fye, how I shake!  
Unmanly fear unnerves my beating heart,

B

## THE TEST OF GUILT.

And palsies all my limbs! — — How now, what's that? —  
 Methought I heard the fall of footsteps near; —  
 Yes, and again: — No, no; 'tis no such thing: —  
 Nay, but I dream not: — sure, a human form  
 Ascends the stile: — In goblins I've no faith: —  
 It is a man; — alone too; — that is well: —  
 Behind this tomb I'll take my watchful stand. —  
 So, so; — and this way bent: — then 'tis resolv'd,  
 And murder must be double! — — Well then, pass on:  
 Perhaps, like me, he seeks to shun mankind,  
 And hide himself in darkness. — Shall I strike  
 This second self? — Not yet. —

*Henry. Grim.*

HENRY.

———— 'Tis near the time —

GRIM.

What says he of the time? — I cannot hear. —

HENRY.

How much, Fitzhugh, is this unlike thyself,  
 To seek disguise! — Off, concealment, off;  
 And rest thou there: I'm now myself again, —  
 But yet like one arraign'd in some great cause,  
 Expectant of my sentence do I come,  
 And life, or death, depends upon thy lips,  
 Fair Eleanor. — — Indeed, indeed I feel,  
 My spirits are deprest; and when I cast  
 Mine eyes around, I find all hostile here

[Casts off his cloak.]

THE TEST OF GUILT.

3

To youthfulness and love. — The solemn pomp  
And mould'ring equipage of death display'd  
With monumental warnings, chills my blood!  
—It strikes, oh welcome sound!—five, six;—strike on;—'tis ten!— —  
All is secure, and here the entrance  
To earthly Paradise. —

[He strikes three times upon the door.

*Eleanor. Henry.*

ELEANOR.

[Within.

Who beats upon the door?

HENRY.

She speaks, herself;— the music of the spheres  
Sounds in her voice. — — 'Tis Henry Fitzhugh.

ELEANOR.

[Opening the door.

You're welcome, sir.

HENRY.

A welcome from your mouth,  
Sounds like a blessing from the Saints above:  
I hail the omen, and, if I might dare  
So near approach to female excellence,  
Would crave permission only thus to touch,  
With these unhallow'd lips, that lovely hand. —

ELEANOR.

Go to, go to; — do not forget yourself: —

Remember, sir, you are a gentleman  
 Well nurtur'd, and, I trust, dare not attempt  
 Abuse of confidence: — I pray, come in ;  
 It is unfitting that, at such a time,  
 We should be seen in parley here alone.

[He enters; and she closes the door.

*Grim.*

GRIM.

So, so, my young gallant, you're hous'd at last,  
 And left your skin behind ! — I know thee well,  
 Good master Henry, and I hate thee too.  
 The fiend is kind, and grants me now the means  
 Of ample vengeance ; and if I abate  
 The smallest portion, let me stand accurs'd ! —  
 Mine eyes deceiv'd me, or I surely saw  
 The Baron's daughter : — So, my silken spark,  
 You'd soar apace to greatness : but I'll clip  
 Your wings, brave master Henry ; faith, I will. — —  
 This kerchief ting'd with gore, this bloody knife,  
 I wrap within this cloak ; and from my hands  
 Wipe off this fatal witness. — So ; 'tis painted well ;  
 The train is laid ; and now across the path,  
 I'll place the bleeding body. - - - Hark, I hear  
 A distant shout ; — the village clods are near,  
 Returning from the wake : 'tis they must raise  
 The cry of Murder ! ; I will join the throng  
 With louder cry ; and if my brave gallant  
 Be not too hasty, I shall catch him here.



THE DOOR OF A COUNTRY ALE-HOUSE ON A VILLAGE-GREEN.

*Nicholas.*

NICHOLAS.

[With a jug of ale before him; singing.]

Ever merry, ever gay,  
Laugh the listless hours away:  
Dullness, hence! I love not thee;  
Mirth and song were made for me!

*Osborne. Nicholas.*

OSBORNE.

What! never to be found but, madman-like,  
In Bacchanalian orgies deep engag'd;  
The ale-pot in thine hand; the fumes of ale  
Madd'ning thy brains; and levity at heart?

NICHOLAS.

So ends, good School-master, your fine, fine speech, —  
“ And levity at heart:” — what! would you have  
The blacksmith's anvil there? — In truth, dear sir,  
I like not such dead weights; I'm one of those  
That fly from care, and make the most of life, — —

## THE TEST OF GUILT.

OSBORNE.

A drunkard's life. —

NICHOLAS.

——— No, no ; a merry life.  
 From all your sober, grave non-entities,  
 Select me one can cast the bar with me,  
 Shoot at the butts, run, wrestle, drink, and then ——

OSBORNE.

Well, and what then ?

NICHOLAS.

Why then, in truth, I'll say,  
 He is as bold and good a man as I.

OSBORNE.

A precious proof of goodness, worth his care!

NICHOLAS.

Care be gone, and far away !  
 Thinking will not suit with me :  
 Care brings trouble ev'ry day ;  
 Drinking always sets me free.

Care 's a worm that gnaws the heart,  
 And works without remorse its way ;  
 It seals the source of joy with smart,  
 And— what comes next ? — good lack-a-day !

OSBORNE.

Fye, thou art drunk ;— thy song is out of tune,  
 And out of measure.

THE TEST OF GUILT.

NICHOLAS.

Give me drink, and stint not measure;  
Drinking is the Hero's pleasure!  
Old Lion-heart when cas'd in mail,  
Before he fought, drank deep of ale.  
The Saxon rumkin fill again;  
It smiles, and rids me of my pain.

*Clowns. Nicholas. Osborne.*

PIERCE THE PLOUGHMAN.

Oh master, master!—

JOHN THE SMITH.

Dreadful,—

RALPH THE HIND.

Woeful times!

NICHOLAS.

What ails the varlets? — Speak some one of you. —  
What! has the gad-bee stung ye? — Are ye mad  
Before the dog-days? — How the blockheads stare!

TOM THE HEDGER.

Oh, dreadful tidings!

NICHOLAS.

Tidings! — Bring the bowl: —

THE TEST OF GUILT.

And the Dev'l take he,  
That won't drink with me,  
Whatever the doleful tidings may be.

PIERCE THE PLOUGHMAN.

You know not what's amiss.

RALPH THE HIND.

Oh, we have been so frighten'd!

NICHOLAS.

Hast thou seen a ghost?

DICK THE BAKER.

Worse! Worse!

NICHOLAS.

Away, ye sots! —

The world turns round;  
The ale is sound;  
Come put the pot this way:  
He's but an ass,  
That lets it pass,  
Whate'er the ghost may say!

PIERCE.

Poor mistress Dorothy, your daughter, sir, — —

NICHOLAS.

Well, what of her? —

DICK.

— Lies yonder murder'd!

THE TEST OF GUILT.

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Oh, murder'd cruelly! —

PIERCE.

NICHOLAS.  
Nay, heaven forbid!

PIERCE.  
I saw her lie all bleeding in the path;  
Yes truly, master, cover'd o'er with wounds!

TOM.  
I saw her too; —

RALPH.  
And so did I; —

DICK.  
— And I.

OSBORNE.  
Away, you rogues; you dream!

PIERCE.  
Yes! dream indeed!  
It was good-mistress Dorothy herself;  
I felt her hand, — her hand as cold as clay!

NICHOLAS.  
Holy Saint Michael! is my daughter slain!

PIERCE.  
I saw it with mine eyes.

OSBORNE.  
What! Dorothy!

C

## THE TEST OF GUILT.

PIERCE.

Poor mistress Dorothy.

NICHOLAS.

My child! my child!

RALPH.

Indeed, indeed, she's dead.

OSBORNE.

— It cannot be.

Cease, cease this clamour; see, the old man faints! —  
How is it with thee? — lead him to the seat.

*Grim. Osborne. Nicholas. Clowns.*

GRIM.

Oh murder, murder foul, and horrible!

OSBORNE.

Curse on thy throat! why, what a coil you keep!

GRIM.

If murder will not make us cry aloud,  
What shall demand our voice? — The lanthorn, friends: —  
And who will dare to venture forth with me,  
In search of the aggressor?

CLOWNS.

I, — I, — and I, and I.

THE TEST OF GUILT.

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RALPH.

Yes, to a man we all will go with Grim!

GRIM.

Ralph, bear the lanthorn: and you, follow all  
In silence: for, methought I saw, just now,  
A skulking fellow muffled in a cloak,  
Enter the church-yard. — Ralph, take off thy hood,  
And close the lanthorn round.

RALPH.

Leave that to me: —  
And if we catch the dog, we'll hamper him.

PIERCE.

He shall be hang'd; —

TOM.

And quarter'd; —

DICK.

Aye, and tortur'd after that.

*Osborne. Nicholas.*

OSBORNE.

Fools! do they think that he who did a deed  
So dreadful, will abide the seeking-for?  
But let them go. — Well now, how is it, man?

## THE TEST OF GUILT.

NICHOLAS.

Sick, very sick ! - - - what was the noise about?  
 The sound of murder rings within mine ears : —  
 And Dorothy — where is she ? — lead me home : —  
 All is not right.

OSBORNE.

The clowns are drunk or mad :  
 Lean on my arm ; — they know not what they say ;  
 Come in, come in ; and sit a while with me :  
 For, better tidings will arrive, I trust,  
 Ere long.

NICHOLAS.

Alas, my child, my child !

THE INTERIOR OF THE GARDEN BELONGING TO THE BARON'S  
 CASTLE.

*Eleanor. Henry.*

ELEANOR.

Your character stands fair ; and if report  
 Keep pace with verity, you well deserve  
 My interference : and therefore I have,  
 Waving all ceremony, overpass'd  
 The bounds of strict decorum, to admit  
 This private visit. — Then it seems, you have



An urgent suit (this letter says so much)  
With my dear father ?

HENRY.

Yes, fair excellence ;  
It is an urgent suit : for, it involves  
Such consequences as must raise me up  
To heav'n itself, or cast me down below  
The level of the wretch who begs his bread :  
'Twill make life precious, — or subtract at once  
All its blessings, and in death alone  
Leave hope of respite from a world of woe !

ELEANOR.

Of such importance ! you astonish me :  
Inform me on what ground I am to plead ?  
And all a simple maiden like myself  
Can interpose in favour of thy cause,  
Shall heartily be urg'd ; nor will I take  
(Believe me, sir,) denial easily.

HENRY.

Permit me, lady, thus to speak my thanks.

[He kneels.

ELEANOR.

Arise, I pray you, sir, arise, and speak ;  
In verity, I'll make thy cause my own.

HENRY.

To such transcendent goodness let me kneel,  
And grow unto the ground : — Oh, let me be  
Thy servant, lady !

## THE TEST OF GUILT.

ELEANOR.

Well, and be so then :  
But rise, and let us talk on equal terms.

HENRY.

On equal terms! — with thee, on equal terms!  
Forbid it, Saints! that, in the wild career  
Of self-approving, I should entertain  
Thought so extravagant! — No; let me kneel, —  
Yes, humbly kneel, and to perfection bow.

ELEANOR.

Be cautious; give no cause to disapprove  
The good I've heard: — for thou hast learn'd, I find,  
The guileful art, so common with thy sex, —  
To flatter; — yes, and flattery, I ween,  
To falsehood claims such near relationship,  
That he who can with ease practise the one,  
Is t'other's slave: — Such servants please me not.

HENRY.

Could'st thou, celestial beauty!, view my heart, —  
View the dear image on that heart imprest,  
So like thyself, — and unimpassion'd read  
Th' indented motto, *Love*; Oh, kill me then;  
For life or death belong alike to thee!

ELEANOR.

You much alarm me: — say, what is thy suit?

HENRY.

That sighs and tears, and services long paid,  
Might raise me from the dust whereon I stand,  
And do away the want, by birth entail'd,  
Of large domain, and titled ancestry.

ELEANOR.

Suppose yourself possessed of them both. —

HENRY.

Then, fairest lady, kneeling at thy feet,  
I'd lay them low as offerings of Love,  
Unbosom all my soul, and shew you there  
Your image idoliz'd!—

ELEANOR.

You speak so plain,  
That ignorance itself cannot mistake: —  
You do me wrong; yes, in fair truth, you do.  
Take back your letter; — I must tell you, sir,  
Unlike a gentleman, you have abus'd  
The faith I plac'd in your fair character,  
And lur'd me hither on some false pretence,  
Not having question for the Baron's ear.

HENRY.

If mercy be thy sex's attribute,  
Spare a full heart depress'd with pungent grief,  
Or bid it burst, and, o'erflowing, drown  
The springs of life: — I have in sooth no suit,  
But such as justice, honour, love, require  
Should first be made to thee.

ELEANOR.

To me thy suit? .  
To me, Fitzhugh? — I have been much to blame  
In granting this lone meeting. — Pray, begone.

HENRY.

In mercy, hear me !

ELEANOR.

I have heard too much.

HENRY.

Why then, command me hence, and with a frown  
 Doom me to death : yet I must love thee still : —  
 But, dearest excellence, I oft have heard  
 That Angels condescend to smile on Men,  
 When they receive their pray'rs : — I kneel to thee ;  
 Thou hast an Angel's form : — be merciful  
 Like Heav'n's inhabitants, and be ador'd. —

ELEANOR.

If these professions spring from truth alone,  
 What need is there for so much blandishment ?  
 Sincerity delights in simple speech,  
 No varnish needing : but, deception seeks  
 The guileful ornament of empty words.

HENRY.

Nay, dearest lady, —

ELEANOR.

Hear me yet awhile : —  
 You know, I have a Father : —, need I say,  
 He is the guardian of my virgin years ?  
 If me you seek, pay first your court to him.

HENRY.

But, may I hope, his sanction so obtain'd,  
You'll condescend to hear me with a smile?

ELEANOR.

If he commands, I know my duty, sir.

HENRY.

Your duty, lady? — And for duty's sake,  
To hear a lover? — Lowly as I stand,  
Compar'd with thee, may I not hope, in time,  
By constancy, to win one smile at least  
For true love's sake? — Oh, flatter me so far;  
In mercy, bid me cherish such a hope!

ELEANOR.

His voice perchance, — I say not his command, —  
Might justify such hope.

HENRY.

—— So to the wretch,  
Condemn'd to death, and fetter'd in his cell,  
Sound the sweet notes of pardon! — Yes, in truth,  
I'll see the Baron, plead my cause with him:  
But — should my insignificancy stand  
'Twixt him and my consent, — should he refuse, —

ELEANOR.

I must not hear thee farther: — let us part: —  
You grow too loud; perhaps we're overheard:  
And reputation, like the purest skin

D.

Of parchment, easily receives a stain  
That ages ne'er efface. — I pray thee, go.

HENRY.

Yet one request. — Having preferr'd my suit,  
Should a refusal doom me to my death,  
Permit, to-morrow night, one audience more, —  
'Tis all I ask, — though but for one half-hour.

ELEANOR.

It cannot, must not be ; — indeed now — no.

HENRY.

Upon my knees I humbly supplicate. —

ELEANOR.

No, no! — Farewell. — I pray thee do not come;  
Indeed I must not see you. — Should you come,  
Do it with caution. —

MATILDA.

Lady, lady!

[Within.

ELEANOR.

Hear : — I am call'd. — Anon. — Nay, no more words.

HENRY.

Permit thus much at least ; and now I go.  
Celestial Saints protect thee! — Oh, farewell!

*Matilda. Eleanor.*

MATILDA.

Where are you, lady?

ELEANOR.

Here; where should I be? —

MATILDA.

Not here, in truth, fair lady: supper waits;  
And these night-dews are nothing favourable  
To health, as I have heard the leeches\* say.

ELEANOR.

In truth, I heed them not; — nor have I found  
The dews aught hurtful. — Is my lord return'd?

MATILDA.

In sooth he is not; nor, as I am told,  
Will be at home till midnight. — Within you'll find  
Letters from him. —

ELEANOR.

Why did you not at first  
(Beshrew thee, wench!) so tell me? — Lend thine arm.

\* *Leech*; an old term for a physician.

## THE TEST OF GUILT.

## THE CHURCH-YARD.

*Grim. Clowns. Henry.*

Ralph.—

GRIM.

RALPH.

— Well, here am I.

GRIM.

— Bring here the lanthorn,  
And with thy hood shut closely up the light.

RALPH.

What, so?—

GRIM.

— Yes, so.

DICK.

— Mercy, mercy on us!

GRIM.

What ails the fool? Be silent, if thou canst.

DICK.

Why, here is blood!—



THE TEST OF GUILT.

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GRIM.

— What, thou art frighten'd, oaf!

DICK.

No, no; but hadst thou, Grim, done such a murder! —

GRIM.

*I*, villain! —

DICK.

— No, no, not you, — but had *I* done it, —  
I should not dare to enter this church-yard.

GRIM.

And why not, blockhead?

DICK.

Why, I should be afraid.

GRIM.

You are afraid: — see how the booby shakes!

DICK.

Why, blood and murder well may make me shake!

GRIM.

What does he say of murder?

DICK.

— 'Twould make you shake!

How, dog!—

GRIM.

DICK.

— Yes, if you had done it.

GRIM.

— Hark, you rogue;

Speak more of murder, and I'll dash your teeth

Adown your throat; — be silent, — bring the light; —

There's something in this broken tomb. — What have we here? —

A houpland\* large enough to make a tent. —

Unfold it carefully: — 'Tis stain'd with blood. —

PIERCE.

And here's a knife to add, that's bloody too.

\* Concerning this garment, Mr. STRUTT observes, in his work intitled, "A Complete View of the Dress and Habits of the People of England," vol. ii. p. 349: — "The *houppeland* was a loose upper garment of the super-tunic kind. It might not be worn by the clergy under the surplice, because it gave an unseemliness to the form of the collar of that vestment. — It is sometimes specified to be the same as the short tunic: and lord Bernier, in his translation of Froissart, calls it a *cloke*: but in the original, it rather seems to have been a sort of night or morning gown †. — At the coronation of Henry the Fourth, the lords had long scarlet *houppelandes*, with long mantles over them; and the knights and squires wore scarlet *houppelandes*, but without the mantles. — In a wardrobe-inventory of garments belonging to Henry the Fifth, I find mentioned black *houppeland*, lined with grey fur, estimated at twenty shillings; and the linings of minever, with large sleeves for two *houppelands*, valued at ten shillings."

† Froissart says that, when Charles the Sixth of France, heard of the assassination of the constable de Clisson at Paris, he determined to see him; and, rising instantly, took no more time than to vest himself with a *houppeland*, and put a pair of shoes upon his feet. Froissart, Cronique, tom. iv. cap. 39. sub an. 1392."

GRIM.

Here's somewhat else. —

RALPH.

— A kerchief.— Surely, Grim,  
I know that kerchief. —

PIERCE.

Oh! 'twas Dorothea's!

GRIM.

'Twas murder'd Dorothea's: — and see, 'tis wot  
With her heart's blood.

DICK.

A doleful sight indeed!

GRIM.

Silence, I say; — put by the light; retire,  
And stand aloof to watch: — the wretch accurs'd  
Who owns this cloak, anon, I trust, will come  
To bear it hence: — away, without a word! —

HENRY.

[Advancing from the gate.

Now as I pass'd the gate, methought I heard  
The sound of human voices. — —

GRIM.

— Did you so? —

I thank the devil, we were just in time. — (aside.)

## THE TEST OF GUILT.

HENRY.

It was the breeze fresh wafted from the west ;  
 I feel it rising ; now it wantons thro' the grove,  
 And in low murmurs speaks its presence here : —  
 But where is now my cloak ? I must not leave  
 That witness of my coming here, behind.

GRIM.

No truly ; if you did, you were to blame.

HENRY.

Yes, here it is. — How now ? what have I here?  
 What's this ? a knife?— as I do live, it is :  
 The garment too is damp. — What mystery  
 Is here involv'd ?—

GRIM.

We'll tell thee what, anon.

HENRY.

How now ? who's there ? —

GRIM.

—'Tis I.

HENRY.

I know that voice : —  
 What brings thee here, I pray, so late at night ?

GRIM.

That you shall know : — seize on him ; hold him fast !

THE TEST OF GUILT.

23

HENRY.

Who dares to hold me? — Sure, you know me well :  
Wherefore this outrage ?

RALPH.

Much against our wills,  
Good master Henry, do we hold you now :  
But we must do our duty.

HENRY.

—Are ye mad ?

GRIM.

Here is the kerchief—(Ralph, hold up the light)  
Wet with her blood; —and here his cloak all bloody: —

PIERCE.

And here the bloody knife. — Alas! alas!  
Who, master Henry, could have thought such things  
Should have been done by you? —

GRIM.

—Would nothing short  
Of murder satisfy you? —fy! fy! fy!

HENRY.

Or ye, my friends, or I, am surely mad :  
I dream I know not what: the cloak indeed  
Is smear'd with blood; — the knife, — the kerchief too, —

E

RALPH.

Yes, yes, we know it well. Alas, poor wench,  
'Tis wet with her heart's blood!

HENRY.

And what, my friends, have I to do with this?

DICK.

Nothing, we hope. —

GRIM.

—Nothing, you trembling lout!  
Is murder nothing! — hold him fast, my friends.

HENRY.

And murder, did you say, speaking to me? —

GRIM.

To you; why not? — The woman there lies dead:  
And these plain witnesses of guilt are found,  
Belonging to thee. —

HENRY.

—How! a woman dead,  
And I her murderer! Grant me patience, Heav'n!  
Nay tell me, friends, and tell me in the full,  
What is my accusation? —

GRIM.

—Said I not,  
'Twas murder? —

THE TEST OF GUILT.

27

HENRY.

—Can it be? am I awake?

GRIM.

To purpose foul, not long ago, thou wast.

HENRY.

Whom, say you, did I murder?

GRIM.

—— Whom but she,  
Whose bleeding body lies in yonder field,  
A ghastly spectacle?— Go to, go to;  
These idle questions cannot serve thy turn.

HENRY.

I speak not to thee: — say, some one of you,  
And he that is my friend, give me her name.

RALPH.

Poor mistress Dorothy, the only child  
Of Nicholas, lies welt'ring in her blood!

HENRY.

Then, Heaven rest her soul! — but for myself,  
I'm taken in a toil, and must submit. —  
Well, whither will you take me?

RALPH.

—Before the Baron.

## THE TEST OF GUILT.

GRIM.

The Baron is from home : — give him in charge  
To Absalom, the constable and bailiff to my lord.

HENRY. .

Just as you please. —

RALPH.

Well then, good sir, come on :  
It grieves us much to see thee in such state.

HENRY.

I thank thee for thy pity : — lead the way.

END OF THE FIRST PART.



THE  
**Test of Guilt.**

---

**THE SECOND PART.**

---

AN APARTMENT IN THE BARON'S HOUSE.

*Eleanor. Jenny.*

ELEANOR.

CANST thou perform the duties I've enjoin'd?

JENNY.

Indeed forsooth, and more if you require;  
Yes, yes, and I will serve you faithfully.

ELEANOR.

I think thou wilt: I have forgot thy name.

JENNY.

'Tis Jenny, if it please you.

ELEANOR.

—Have you been

Before in service, Jenny?

JENNY.

— No indeed.

ELEANOR.

And wherefore art thou so solicitous  
To quit thy mother's house?

JENNY.

Because, forsooth,  
She lov'd me not of late, but beat me oft.

ELEANOR.

I've heard as much : but wherefore did she so?

JENNY.

Lady, because her husband hated me.

ELEANOR.

Husband! — I thought thy father had been dead?

JENNY.

He's dead indeed; — I have no father now!

ELEANOR.

Nay, nay, weep not: — Thy mother married thee  
A second time? —

JENNY.

To my mishap, indeed,  
He has a daughter by a former wife,  
On whom he dotes ;—and therefore he hates me.

ELEANOR.

Nay, that's unreasonable :— why hate thee?

JENNY.

Because, forsooth, the neighbours say, —

ELEANOR.

Prithee go on : —

JENNY.

But 'tis so foolish, lady :—

ELEANOR.

Pray proceed :—

JENNY.

—Well then, that I was handsomer than she.

ELEANOR.

That made thee proud, perchance?

JENNY.

— No, no, indeed.

ELEANOR.

Sometimes, at least, thou might'st have been in fault.

## THE TEST OF GUILT.

JENNY.

Poor people, lady, always are in fault.

ELEANOR.

I said not so ; I did not mean it so :  
For, thy simplicity wins on me much.

JENNY.

Yes indeed — I'm very simple, lady.

ELEANOR.

Continue so ; I like thee better for 't :—  
But I am told you often have been sent  
Through the church-yard, and very late at night ?

JENNY.

At all hours, lady, to the Lower Green,  
For ale, and cakes, and spices, when they held  
Carousals with their gossips : — and fall oft  
They held them too !—

ELEANOR.

Did not your sister go ?

JENNY.

Alas ! she was afraid, — she dar'd not go !

ELEANOR.

And wast not thou afraid ?

JENNY.

—Oh no, forsooth.

THE TEST OF GUILT.

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ELEANOR.

But I have heard it in the village said,  
That troubled spirits walk at midnight hour  
Around the tombs :— hast thou not heard so much ?

JENNY.

Yes often, lady.

ELEANOR.

What! and not afraid?

JENNY.

Oh no; for, in that very church-yard lies  
My dear, dear Father buried : and I know  
He would protect me from the evil sprites  
And hurtful goblins.

ELEANOR.

Indeed!—

JENNY.

— Yes, lady :

And oft-time I've been inclin'd to *kneel*  
Beside his grave, and whisper to him there  
How evil I was used ; but that I fear'd  
It might disturb his rest, and call him back  
Into this naughty world again :— And I  
Had better suffer here than break his rest.

ELEANOR.

It shew'd thy duty. — Go; be diligent,  
And thou shalt not repent thy coming here. —

F

I'm going to my chamber : send, I pray,  
Matilda to me. — I will be thy friend.

A ROOM IN THE HOUSE OF ABSALOM THE BAILIFF.

*Absalom. Henry.*

ABSALOM.

I must not hear thee ; no, I dare not do 't.

HENRY.

Dost thou not know me then, good Absalom ?

ABSALOM.

Know thee ! my honour'd patron's only son ! —  
Oh, my heart bleeds to be thy jailer, sir !  
But such hard task my office forces on me.

HENRY.

—And if you know me, give me credence then ;  
I am not us'd to falsify my word.

ABSALOM.

Why, would you seek my ruin ? —

HENRY.

— Heav'n forbid !

ABSALOM.

It must be, if I suffer your escape.

HENRY.

I wish not to escape ; I will return,  
And that so speedily, no one shall know  
That I have been abroad :— But, Absalom,  
Indeed I have a cause of great import  
Requires awhile my presence :— well I know,  
You credit not the foul report that 's made  
Against my fame, unsullied till this hour.

ABSALOM.

No, on my soul I do not ; no, in truth :  
Your father was my friend, and if thou wert  
Mine only child, I could not love thee more,  
Nor would I be ungrateful, but for this —

HENRY.

— Nay then, be rich for life ; — here, take this key,  
And this ; — the first commands my chamber-door,  
The last my cabinet ; there wilt thou find  
More wealth to satisfy thee, than the loss  
Of two such posts as this.

ABSALOM.

I see, young man,  
You have mistaken me : — But that I think  
Misfortune has in part derang'd thy mind,  
I should not brook this insult ; no, sir, no :  
What my affection could refuse for thee,  
A bribe can never tempt : — But I have done. —  
That closet looks into the garden ; I shall leave

Free access to the air : your bed you'll find  
 But coarse, 'tis true, yet clean ; if aught you want,  
 This bell will summon us.—Farewell, farewell.

*Henry*

HENRY.

And is it so ? — Ungrateful Absalom ! —  
 Yet wherefore do I say so ? Is he not  
 An officer of justice ? — And what though  
 He owes it to my father, he is sworn  
 To do his duty. — This room, he says,  
 Commands the garden : and indeed it does :—  
 The window is unbarr'd ; — to leap were death :—  
 Where is the bed ? — I'll rest myself a while. —  
 Why, as I live, the clothes are all cast off,  
 And the cross-cording thrown upon the floor. —  
 Fool that I was ! I see, the good old man  
 Has pointed out the means for my escape. —  
 Now for the garden : — Once more will I see  
 My dearest Eleanor, and clear up  
 To her my innocence : I'll then return,  
 And patiently abide what Heaven allots.

[He goes out, and returns  
 instantly with a cord.]



THE TEST OF GUILT.

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AN APARTMENT IN THE BARON'S HOUSE.

*Eleanor. Matilda.*

ELEANOR.

How like you my new servant?

MATILDA.

—Passing well,

As a new servant ; she is wond'rous kind,  
And gives us all *forsooths* at every word,  
And curtsies too with much docility,  
(I cannot choose but laugh to see how low);  
Then with a spring she's up again so soon,  
One has not time to answer with a nod.

ELEANOR.

Yet I mistake me if that rustic rust  
Encases not an open, gen'rous mind:  
Beseech you, use her well, and nurture her  
With kindness and good-humour : you will find  
The diamond brighten as the rust wears off.

MATILDA.

I'll try, if only for experiment.

*Jenny. Eleanor. Matilda.*

Oh lady, lady!—

JENNY.

ELEANOR.

—Now what ails the wench?

JENNY.

Foul doings are abroad, and Dorothy  
Is murder'd, lady!—

ELEANOR.

Who is this Dorothy?

JENNY.

Daughter to Nicholas the parish-clerk:—  
And poor young master Henry is accus'd.

MATILDA.

Peace! thou art mad.—

ELEANOR.

Nay, interrupt her not:—  
Didst thou not mention Henry's name?

JENNY.

I did, and woe the time! --- the sweetest youth  
The sun e'er shone on—

ELEANOR.

—Well, and what of him?

JENNY.

Has murder'd Dorothy.

MATILDA.

—The lady faints. - - -

Look up, dear lady. — Oh, the wench is mad:  
It is some other Henry, not Fitzhugh.

JENNY.

It is Fitzhugh.

MATILDA.

Thou art distracted, hussey.

JENNY.

I be no hussey : — sure as I'm alive,  
I saw him bound, — I saw him led away.

MATILDA.

Plague on thy tongue, thou screech-owl!  
Prate no more: — Go to, and call for help;  
Dost thou not see the lady is unwell?  
Some water quickly. —

*Eleanor. Matilda.*

ELEANOR.

Murder! was it so? —

And Henry's name! — can such extremes unite? —  
Indeed, Matilda, I am wondrous ill.

## THE TEST OF GUILT.

MATILDA.

Heed not the wench ; she's heard she knows not what ;  
Some foolish tale perhaps to frighten her.

*Jenny. Matilda. Eleanor.*

JENNY.

Here is the water. — Oh, it grieves my heart  
To see my dear young lady so unwell!

MATILDA.

Your idle story is the only cause. —

JENNY.

If it be idle, sure I am 'tis true.  
Poor master Henry, — he must surely die.

ELEANOR.

Send her away ; I cannot bear her talk : —  
Conduct me to my chamber : for, my brain  
Is all confus'd ; — I'm mad, or like to be.

*Jenny.*

JENNY.

So sure as I am born, the Lady loves  
Young master Henry : and I wonder not ;  
He is so handsome. — Had I known so much,

My tongue should have been cancer'd in my mouth,  
 Sooner than she should have been thus disturb'd,  
 E'en so unwittingly we foolish folks  
 Run into error, and find out too late  
 What ignorance withheld, a cause for tears.

OUTSIDE OF NICHOLAS'S HOUSE ON TEWIN GREEN.

*Grim. Nicholas.*

GRIM.

I knew it well ; I knew you lov'd me not,

NICHOLAS.

Yet like a shadow on a sunny day,  
 I've caught thee following my daughter's step :  
 Tho' oft forbidden, thou hast follow'd still :  
 And I have mark'd that when severe rebuke  
 Commanded separation, yet her eyes  
 Have follow'd thine ; aye, and the stifed sigh  
 Has languish'd in her bosom, when you turn'd  
 Your back upon her.

GRIM.

— True ; I'll grant 'tis true :  
 And be it far from me to disavow  
 My passion for her. — Oh sweet Dorothy ! ---  
 That villain Henry ! --- Murder ! --- But for him,  
 And thee opposing, we had both been happy,

NICHOLAS.

I know not that, nor can I well believe  
That Henry lov'd the girl, and still far less  
That she affected him ; it cannot be ;  
His name was not familiar with her tongue,  
As thine has been ; nor did he visit here.

GRIM.

'Tis likely he would boldly shew himself,  
Having resolv'd the ruin of thy child !  
Or wist ye he would ask your kind consent  
To her undoing ? — Having ruin'd her,  
He flies at nobler game, and scales the wall  
Of titled dignity. — Is it not plain,  
To stop the voice of injur'd innocence,  
He did this dreadful murder ? —

NICHOLAS.

— Is it so ?

GRIM.

Open your eyes. — Is not thy daughter dead ?  
Are not her bleeding wounds sufficient proof ?  
In very truth, I have suspected long  
He meant her ruin.

NICHOLAS.

— Wherefore tell me not ?

GRIM.

Because I knew, one word from that base boy  
Would have with thee outweigh'd my honest speech :  
Therefore in silence I have mourn'd her fall.

NICHOLAS.

The more's the pity: — but I blame thee not.  
 Like one aston'd or waking from a dream,  
 I know not what to think, nor how to act.—  
 Henry Fitzhugh my daughter's murderer!  
 Then trust no more to smiles, deportment mild,  
 And nurtur'd gentleness, when hell itself  
 Lies at perdue within so fair a form.  
 Oh, I am mad! —

GRIM.

—It works as I could wish. — (aside.)  
 How now! what's whistling in the wind,  
 That brings ye here so swiftly, masters all?

*Pierce. Tom. Dick. Grim. Nicholas.*

PIERCE.

Young Henry has escap'd from Absalom;  
 And all the village people shout for joy:  
 They swear that he is innocent.

TOM.

—Ay, that they do:  
 And sure as I'm alive, I think they will  
 Have bonfires on the Green.

GRIM.

— For his escape?

DICK.

Oh yes indeed: and we be all so glad—

GRIM.

And so should I, if they would hang ye all,  
So be ye found him not. —Fy, shameful brutes!  
Rejoice, because a murderer escapes?

DICK.

Aye, we are always sure of your good word!

GRIM.

And well do ye do deserve it. — Go in there,  
Ye clodpoles, go; and see the bloody corpse  
Of this good man's poor daughter, and rejoice  
That he who cruelly could murder her,  
Is fled from justice!

RALPH.

—Ay but, Grim, we hope,—  
And all our neighbours say, he's innocent.

GRIM.

Grant me patience: Saw ye not the knife,  
The kerchief, and the bloody cloak? — Away!  
I'll waste no further speech with ye. — Now, sir,  
You've heard that Henry is escap'd.

NICHOLAS.

How can it be?



THE TEST OF GUILT.

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GRIM.

How can it be, indeed !  
Is it not known, that Henry has much wealth ?  
And money too, 'tis said, will tempt low minds  
To swerve from duty. — Absalom, I've heard,  
Is Henry's friend : — yes, and a purse well fill'd  
With golden angels\*, pleaded, I doubt not,  
Most cogently.

NICHOLAS.

— By heav'n, it shall not be !  
I'll to the Baron. — Justice shall be done :  
My daughter's blood cries to me from the ground,  
And shall have full atonement.

GRIM.

— Now you speak  
As well becomes a father : — there's my hand :  
And tho' full oft you have unkindly used me,  
Yet, for the love I bore thy murder'd child,  
I'll join in this just cause : Lose then no time :  
The Baron is return'd ; let's see him now :  
And summon up your courage ; boldly speak.

NICHOLAS.

And so I will : for vengeance I will cry ;  
Justice demands my voice ; my daughter's blood  
Shall be aveng'd ; — It shall, — it shall, — it shall !

\* *Angel* ; a gold coin, worth about ten shillings.

THE GARDEN BELONGING TO THE BARON'S CASTLE.

*Matilda. Eleanor. --- Henry.*

MATILDA.

Dear lady, be persuaded ; this fresh air  
Is so reviving. — Come, come, lean on me :  
Nay, do not weep so : Now, in very truth,  
I'll give my new silk kirtle\* for a smile.

ELEANOR.

I know thou meanest well, though ill applied  
Thy speech, Matilda : — Lead me to that seat : —  
My thoughts are all confus'd : — I prithee sing ;  
For thou canst sing.

MATILDA.

—Lady, what shall I sing ?

ELEANOR.

E'en what thou wilt, but plaintive let it be ;  
Some woeful ditty ; that will please me best.

MATILDA.

Such songs I know not ; mine are mirthful airs.

\* A kind of short jacket, according to *Bailey*.

THE TEST OF GUILT.

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ELEANOR.

Go to : for surely I have heard you sing  
Maid Marian's lamentation.

MATILDA.

— Yes in truth :  
But such a dismal subject suits not now ;  
No, I beseech you, hear a cheerful song. —

ELEANOR.

Or that, or none. —

MATILDA.

Then, lady, I obey.

*Song.*

Ah me! my soul's opprest with grief ;  
In tears alone I find relief ;  
    Oh wretched, wretched Marian !  
Here, underneath this marble stone,  
He lies : — and I am left alone ;  
    Oh hapless, widow'd Marian !  
And clay-cold are his lips so sweet,  
Enshrouded in the winding-sheet :  
    Ah poor, forsaken Marian !  
No golden chaplet will I wear,  
Nor deck with flow'rs my flowing hair ;  
    Unfit are those for Marian : —  
The willow round my brows I'll bind ;  
For fortune is to me unkind,  
    And frowns severe on Marian !  
When as I sang ; now will I sigh,  
And cherish sorrow till I die.  
    Farewell, farewell to Marian !

So ends the mournful strain: And tell me now,  
How do you like it, lady?

ELEANOR.

—Hast thou done?

In truth, I thought there had been more to sing.---  
What noise is that?

MATILDA.

I'm frighten'd; some one strikes  
Upon the gate;---and yet again: — oh me!

ELEANOR.

Be silent, pray thee! — Heav'ns! what can it mean?  
'Tis Henry's signal. —

MATILDA.

Save us, Holy Saints!—  
Let us go in, good lady; let us go.  
Henry's dead, and 'tis his ghost. — Again!  
For heaven's sake let's go.

ELEANOR.

Enquire, who calls.

MATILDA.

Indeed I dare not, — dare not for the world:  
Good lady, go; dear lady, let us go.

ELEANOR.

Fy, what a coil you keep!---Who is without?

THE TEST OF GUILT.

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'Tis I, dear lady. —

HENRY.

[on the outside.

ELEANOR.

'Tis my Henry's voice.

HENRY.

A moment's hearing grant, for mercy's sake!

[without.

MATILDA.

O lady, hear me ; on my knees I beg ; —  
Some thief ; some villain ; — open not the door ! —  
Foul deeds are done abroad, and fearful sights  
May well be seen. --- Nay then, I dare not stay :  
I'll raise the house however to thine aid.

*Eleanor. Henry.*

ELEANOR.

Who is without ? I pray thee, tell thy name.

HENRY.

I am Fitzhugh.

[still without.

ELEANOR.

And wherefore art thou come, ill-fated youth, —  
Thy hands imbru'd with blood ?

[opening the door,  
Henry enters.

HENRY.

— By all my hopes  
Of future happiness, I'm innocent !

H

ACT II

100

SCENE II

— Enter the Duke

What a charming creature — the little girl —  
That mother could be kind to her —  
But she, to give me justice, is gone  
— Oh, how the world improves in all things  
The more I know — for my own sake

SCENE III

Take a new world in my hand, if you believe  
That I am guilty —

SCENE IV

— Enter the Duke

If thou art innocent, may Heaven be thy friend  
The cloud that hangs in heavy air thy name

SCENE V

Oh, thou art wonderful good — and if perchance  
Hereafter, when Fate yet shall be in mine  
His innocence may shine — though, though a year  
For one that he'd be there, he'd be there  
Sweet Saint, farewell — — — for ever!

SCENE VI

— Enter the Duke

*Eleanor. Matilda. Servants.*

MATILDA.

Here, here she is, — frighted to death, I fear: —  
How is it, lady? — Pray come in with us.

ELEANOR.

Support me, I beseech thee, for I feel  
A sudden faintness!

MATILDA.

— Nay then thou hast seen  
Some evil sprite, I fear, to frighten thee.

ELEANOR.

Go to, thou foolish wench; no sprite I've seen,  
More frightful than thyself; mere fancy all: —  
Thy shadow surely will affright thee next.  
But let us in: — Indeed I saw no sprite.

A HALL IN THE BARON'S HOUSE.

*Nicholas. Grim. Porter.*

NICHOLAS.

— But I must see the Baron: —

PORTER.

— So you said:

## THE TEST OF GUILT.

NICHOLAS.

And instantly,—

PORTER.

— Not so.

NICHOLAS.

— Indeed, I must and will.

PORTER.

Howe'er importunate, that cannot be:  
He is with his confessor.

NICHOLAS.

— Well, what then?

'Tis Justice cries, and Justice must be heard.

PORTER.

In good time be it. — See, the Baron comes.

GRIM.

Speak boldly now.

*Nicholas. Baron. Grim.*

NICHOLAS.

I come, my gracious Lord,  
For justice :— My poor murder'd daughter lies  
Dead in my house;— her gaping wounds demand  
Justice from thee.



THE TEST OF GUILT.

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BARON.

— Has Justice shut her ears,  
That thou art grown so loud? Lower thy tone,  
Or I shall think thee mad.

NICHOLAS.

Mad! — Yes, I'm mad. —  
I have no daughter; and the murderer,  
By foul corruption set at liberty,  
Laughs at the law, and justifies his crime!

BARON.

I understand him not: — Who has escap'd?

GRIM.

The man that slew his daughter, — young Fitzhugh.

BARON.

Escap'd from Absalom? — impossible!

GRIM.

Your pardon, good my Lord, but it is true.

BARON.

Then he must answer for his prisoner.

NICHOLAS

But, gracious Lord, admit not of delay; —  
The foul assassin may escape the while;  
I do entreat thee give this man the pow'r,  
And he will hunt him up, — yea tho' he be  
Earth'd like a fox, and hid from human eye.

BARON.

Then let him take our warrant, and such aid  
As he thinks requisite; for, murder claims  
No favour nor protection. — See you bring  
The Bailiff with you: — his integrity,  
Full often prov'd, forbids me to suspect  
That bribes could move him: but in such a case,  
Neglect alone becomes a weighty crime,  
And must be punish'd with severity.

NICHOLAS.

Thou hast, my Lord, judg'd righteously indeed:  
May Heav'n reward thee! — Now, my daughter's blood  
Shall be aveng'd. — Go, Grim, go seek him out;  
The lurking traitor! let him not escape;  
Pursue him to the centre of the earth,  
And bring him back to justice.

GRIM.

— Doubt me not.

BARON.

There is my warrant: and some five or six  
Of my domestics, such as thou shalt choose,  
Will follow thee. — May fair success attend  
Thine undertaking! — Good old man, go home;  
Compose thy mind; and leave the task to me  
Of doing justice: thou shalt be aveng'd.

END OF THE SECOND PART.

THE  
**Test of Guilt.**

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THE THIRD PART.

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ABSALOM'S HOUSE.

*Grim. Absalom. Gregory, &c.*

GRIM.

**HUSH**, hush ; come quietly : — There ; stand you there,  
There you, and you, and you : — Be ready all  
For my protection. —

GREGORY.

— Yes, yes, fear us not.

GRIM.

What ho! what ho!

[knocks at the door.

ABSALOM.

— Who knocks and calls so loud? [within.

GRIM.

'Tis I, would speak with master Absalom.

ABSALOM.

I come anon.

[within.

GRIM.

— Be faithful to your trust.

ABSALOM.

What brings thee hither, Grim, at this late hour ?

GRIM.

Only to seize thy person, Absalom.

ABSALOM.

On what authority ?

GRIM.

— The Baron's warrant.

ABSALOM.

Yes, I know the hand : — But wherefore, friends,  
Come you thus arm'd against a poor old man ?  
His honour's warrant, nay his honour's word,  
Would have ensur'd obedience.

GRIM.

— Look you, sir,

'Twas not the fear of you that arm'd our hands :  
But that same murd'ring fellow who, it seems,

Thou, master Absalom, (with rev'rence due  
To thine obedience,) hast unlawfully  
Set at full liberty; thou, Absalom,  
Thou honest Absalom: — But money does  
Strange things, good Absalom: for a round sum,  
It looks so well, *I* might have done the same.

ABSALOM.

— Nor stopp'd there, Grim; you'd murder if you dare.

GRIM.

Say that again! — did I — I murder her?

ABSALOM.

I said not that.

GRIM.

— Villain, what didst thou say?

ABSALOM.

*Villain* from thee! a wretch despis'd by all;  
Nay hated by mankind; — your very name  
Is black with crimes, mean, despicably low; —  
A wretch without a mind!

GRIM.

— Provoke me not.

ABSALOM.

And dost thou think I fear a thing like thee?  
Yes, I repeat it, thou hast but to add

The sin of murder to thy list of crimes,  
And thou shalt be a villain, then, complete.

GRIM.

Thou shalt repent. — Go to, thou art a fool.

ABSALOM.

Thou art far worse than that ; thou art a knave.

GRIM.

But wherefore with this idiot do we waste  
The time that's precious? — Let us in, my friends,  
And search the house with strictest scrutiny :  
I much suspect this trusty friend of his,  
This faithful servant of the public weal,  
Has hid the murderer, and rais'd the cry  
Of his escape, the better to elude  
The search that's made, — and, when the bruit's o'er,  
To send him in disguisement far away.

ABSALOM.

Go in, my friends, and satisfy yourselves.  
Shew the way, Sampson ; — give them free ingress  
To every chamber : Pray be satisfied.

GRIM.

Search every-where, my friends ; I will secure  
Old honest Absalom. —

[Servants withdraw.

ABSALOM,

— Unfeeling wretch!  
To converse with thee, is but loss of time.

GRIM.

And does your wisdom think so? And yet perchance  
What thou hast done, may lead thy worship's neck  
Into a noose: So much for your wisdom.

[Servants return.

GREGORY.

We've search'd in every corner, nook, and hole,  
And are assur'd he is not in the house:  
The means of his escape do still appear;  
The cord bound to the window. — Whither shall we next?

GRIM.

I must consider; but we'll first convey  
The Bailiff to the castle.

ABSALOM.

Well, I am ready: — Sampson, shut the door.

GRIM.

Ay do, good Sampson; — take possession too,  
For your wise master will not soon return  
To set aside thy claim.

SAMPSON.

— Why look you now,  
Didst thou not come with that same warrant there  
For thy protection, I would curry well,  
With this good oaken towel, thy knave's hide.

ABSALOM.

Sirrah, no more! — — Bless'd saints, what do I see? [Seeing Henry.  
Fool-hardy boy! — Nay, nay, then all is lost.

*Henry. Grim. Absalom. Servants.*

HENRY.

Unhand that good old man ; 'tis me you seek.

GRIM.

— But not at thy command : — Seize on him too.

ABSALOM.

The waning sands left in my glass are few,  
And nothing boots it to futurity,  
If sooner by an hour or two than's due,  
A poor old man like me bids life farewell : —  
To give thee life, I forfeited my own ;  
Why then not live and prove thine innocence,  
And do thy country service ? — This rash act  
In nothing profits me : and thou art lost !

HENRY.

And didst thou think I would permit one hair  
Of thine to fall, disgracefully to fall,  
By transfer to protect my hapless life ?  
No ; arm'd in conscious innocence, I come  
To free the guiltless, and await my doom. —  
I broke the prison ; see, 'tis me you seek ;  
I yield myself : unbind the good old man,  
And give him liberty.

GRIM.

— S' death hold him fast ;  
Upon your peril, sirs, I charge ye do !  
See, here's the warrant reaches to them both.



HENRY.

Am I not found? Why then is he retain'd?

GRIM.

Fine speechifying, sir; you've no command  
At present here, nor am I bound, I trow,  
To answer you.

HENRY.

—I know thee, Grim.

GRIM.

Yes, and I know thee too; the upper hand,  
Time past, you claim'd: but times, they say, will change:—  
You struck me once; 'tis not forgotten, sir;  
You took me unawares, remember that,  
And like a coward,—nay, look not so big,—  
Yes, like a coward, I repeat the word.—

HENRY.

Unhand me but a moment; I will beat  
The falsehood down his throat;—one moment, sirs.—

GRIM.

Secure him well; the wretch that could commit  
One murder, will not fear to add one more.

HENRY.

All-gracious Heav'n! this is indeed too much.

GRIM.

I've spoken truth: and does the truth offend?

HENRY.

It is not in thy nature to speak truth :  
 And if perchance it passes thro' thy lips,  
 'Tis unawares, ill-tim'd, and so disguis'd,  
 That, like a plague, it breeds more lasting ills  
 Than falsity itself.

GRIM.

— Oh, mighty fine,  
 Brave master Henry ! — But will these big words  
 Atone the cry of justice ? think on that.

HENRY.

It cries for vengeance: and tho' I may fall  
 The victim of its cry, the time shall come,  
 And thou base infidel may'st live to see  
 Its full completion, and my innocence  
 Establish'd passing doubt.

GRIM.

— A likely tale !

LANCELOT.

Good master Henry, heed not what he says ;  
 He has no warrant thus to misbehave,  
 Inhuman savage ! — Yes, what better name  
 Is due to thy deservings ?

GRIM.

— Have I not

The Baron's warrant ?

THE TEST OF GUILT.

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LANCELOT.

— Yes, to apprehend

His person : but it reaches not, I trust,  
To license insolence : for my own part,  
My heart bleeds for him ;—

ANOTHER SERVANT.

— And so does mine ;—

ANOTHER.

— And mine.

GREGORY.

Grim, thou'rt a brute.

GRIM.

— And, my fine serving man,

Thou art a fool, and, well I wot, a knave  
Into the bargain :—but curb thou thy tongue,  
Or I will make thee veil thy bonnet \* low,  
And send thee with a broken head to school,  
To learn more manners.

GREGORY.

Oh, make good the boast !

I veil my bonnet to thee !— no, thou rogue,  
I'll shake thee first to ribbands.

GRIM.

Help, help, help !

This fellow is in league with those you hold,  
And would effect a rescue ;— Help, oh help !

\* Or, as we should say in the present day, take off your hat to me ; i. e. shew me respect, or do obeisance to me.

## THE TEST OF GUILT.

LANCELOT.

Gregory, give way; — nay, nay, let go your hold,  
Or I must strike.

GREGORY.

There then, thou sorry knave,  
Thou teach me manners!

LANCELOT.

Prithee now be calm.

GREGORY.

But that thou hast my lord's commission there,  
I'd learn you to abuse a serving man;  
Yes, vagabond, I would.

GRIM.

How, vagabond!

GREGORY.

What can I call thee better? Who knows how  
You get your living? — by theft, for aught I know.

LANCELOT.

Nay, Gregory, have done.

GRIM.

— Let him go on.

GREGORY.

Well, I have done, but not for fear of him.

## LANCELOT.

Waste no more words, my friends : to keep the peace  
 We came commission'd, and but ill, I deem,  
 Our power's exerted. — Young master Henry,  
 And good Bailiff, it grieves me to the soul,  
 To hold ye thus restrain'd : May Holy Saints  
 And Angels give deliv'rance to you both !

## THE MAIL IN THE BARON'S CASTLE.

*The Baron.*

'Tis passing strange that such a virtuous youth,  
 Belov'd by all who knew him, — justly prais'd  
 For gentle manners and deportment mild,  
 Should change so suddenly, and prove at once  
 In all reverse, — from saint to devil turn'd,  
 In one short moment's space : A noble mind  
 Can never in an instant take the tinge  
 Of hell itself : No, no, it cannot be :  
 Some awful mystery involves his fate,  
 And, much I fear, my daughter's happiness :  
 His fall imbrues her eyes with ceaseless tears,  
 Which tho' she seeks to hide, escape unseen,  
 The telltales of affection. — — Well, what now ?

*Gregory. The Baron.*

GREGORY.

We've taken both, my lord. —

BARON.

—So suddenly!

Why then Fitzhugh was in the Bailiff's house?

GREGORY.

Not so, my lord; we search'd it carefully,  
 And found him not; but Absalom we had  
 In custody: and as, on our return,  
 We pass'd the grove, Fitzhugh came out from thence,  
 And yielded up himself, beseeching us  
 That Absalom might have his liberty.

BARON.

Indeed! and what said Absalom to that?

GREGORY.

He blam'd him much, my lord; for, his return  
 Declar'd 'twas his intent to die for him.  
 Oh, 'twas a moving scene; it made me weep,  
 And so did all my fellow servants too,  
 All but that villain Grim!

BARON.

— And what of him?

GREGORY.

Look'd tearless on ; — nay more, with bitter gibes  
 (I would they had been cancers in his mouth !)  
 Derided their misfortunes.

BARON.

— Shame on him !

GREGORY.

Your Honour's warrant was his safeguard then,  
 Or I'd have sent him home with little cause  
 For such untim'd rejoicing.

BARON.

Hold ; no more ;—

See that the pris'ners be kept separate.  
 Tell Grim to wait ; I've farther need of him,  
 When more at leisure. Meantime, treat him well,  
 And see your comrades also do the same,  
 Or you will anger me ; remember that.

GREGORY.

I've done, your honour ; you shall be obey'd.

BARON.

See that I am ; nor let me hear complaint.— [Gregory goes out.  
 Escap'd !—and when he saw his friend confin'd,  
 Rather than he should suffer aught of harm,  
 Gave up himself to death and infamy.  
 Away the thought that such a gen'rous mind  
 Could league with murder !— I will see him soon,  
 And probe the wound, — and probe it to the quick,

If haply I may find some secret clue  
 For the developement : and Benedict  
 Shall follow me : — If then his fortitude  
 Remain unshaken, as I trust it will,  
 The claims of death shall be at least delay'd.

A DUNGEON IN THE CASTLE; — HENRY CHAINED AND ASLEEP.

*Matilda. Eleanor. — Henry.*

MATILDA.

See where he lies; — he is a handsome youth; —  
 And bless me, lady, in so sweet a sleep,  
 He looks just like an angel!

ELEANOR.

Nay prithee hold thy peace, and wake him not.  
 How easy is his sleep! in truth, he smiles.  
 Are these the marks of guilt? Oh no indeed.  
 I've heard that murderers sleep not but when  
 Fatigued Nature can endure no more  
 Of watching; and their sleep is then confus'd,  
 By fits oft starting; for the mind, oppress'd  
 With ominous forebodings, knows no ease: —  
 But see, this sleep is such as babes enjoy,  
 And minds most innocent can only feel.

MATILDA.

He is belied; in truth, he's innocent.



THE TEST OF GUILT.

ELEANOR.

On that fond hope my happiness depends.  
Stand there, I do beseech thee:—If perchance  
Some one approach, give notice.

MATILDA.

— Trust to me.

ELEANOR.

That countenance unwrinkled by a frown,  
Must surely indicate a guiltless heart.  
Ill-fated youth! to what art thou reserv'd?  
To what am I?—Oh me!—See now he wakes.

HENRY.

Where am I?—bless me!—sure, I vision still.  
Dear lady, dost thou kindly condescend  
To visit such a wretch, a sinking wretch,  
The victim of ill-fortune, overwhelm'd  
With accusations false as they are foul?

ELEANOR.

It may surprize you, sir, to see me here;—  
Prudence forbade the visit, — and perchance  
I've pass'd the bounds of timid bashfulness,  
Our sex's ornament. — Mistake not, then,  
The motive of my coming: for, it flows  
From pure compassion.

HENRY.

— Dear angelic saint!  
Like a bright messenger from heav'n you came,

And by your lovely presence, heal the wound  
Of keen affliction rankling in my soul.  
How lovely beauty blooms in innocence!

ELEANOR.

O Henry, you have touch'd the fatal string,  
And its vibration shakes my very soul: —  
That word, — that pond'rous word, — yes, — *innocence*; —  
To see thee here a captive, — see those chains,  
Forg'd for the guilty only, — Oh, my heart! — [turning aside.

HENRY.

And wilt thou leave me, then? leave me so soon,  
Unheard, unjustified?

ELEANOR.

— In truth I came  
To speak such words as sympathizing grief  
Might dictate in thy favour: but, alas!  
The words of comfort falter on my tongue;  
My spirits are depress'd; and I myself  
Do need a comforter: — Poor youth, farewell.

HENRY.

O, do not leave me so: — By all my hopes  
Of future happiness; by all the saints  
And holy angels, blessed sons of light,  
I'm innocent!

ELEANOR.

— May heav'n acquit thee then!

HENRY.

May thunder crush —— !

ELEANOR.

— Hold, Henry, say no more ;

Such fearful execrations frighten me,  
And are allied to guilt : — I do believe : —  
Yet if report speak truth, you lov'd the maid ; —  
Nay, and I blame thee not : — It also says  
She was deserving —

HENRY.

— Do not break my heart,

Nor add unkindness to the miseries  
I stand prepar'd to meet : — No, on my soul,  
I never felt the pow'r of sacred love,  
Till from your lovely eyes I first receiv'd  
The impulse irresistible, — nor sued  
To female beauty e'er before that time ;  
I hugg'd the chain, and, kneeling at thy feet,  
Declar'd myself thy captive.

ELEANOR.

— Flatterer !

HENRY.

Mine are not circumstances, dearest saint,  
To dictate falsehoods. You say, I lov'd the wench :  
I've seen her oft, 'tis true, and as she pass'd,  
Have veil'd my bonnet, (courtesy requir'd  
I should do so,) and gave her the good day :  
But farther speech with her I ne'er exchange'd.

MATILDA.

Lady, lady, some one comes this way.

ELEANOR.

Why then farewell.

HENRY.

— Permit me, ere we part  
(Perhaps for ever), to kiss that lovely hand,  
And for thy welfare supplicate the saints.

*The Baron. Henry. Eleanor. Matilda.*

BARON.

What pageant have we here? — My daughter too!

ELEANOR.

Oh, look not so unkindly, honour'd lord!

BARON.

What brought thee hither?

HENRY.

— Compassion for a wretch  
O'erwhelm'd with woe: oh, plead but thou my cause!

BARON.

What, plead for thee; — what, plead a murderer's cause!  
Away, fond girl, without a word, away!

[Eleanor and Matilda  
withdraw.]

It grieves my soul to see thee, young Fitzhugh,  
 Degraded from thy rank, thus felon-like,  
 O thou disgrace to noble ancestry,  
 Thou murd'rer of thy family's fair fame!

HENRY.

Say on, my lord; let all thy vengeance fall  
 On my devoted head: but let no share  
 Of anger reach thy daughter: like a saint,  
 To comfort the afflicted did she come: —  
 Yet I would gain, if possible, more time;  
 Kind Heav'n may yet, by means to me unknown,  
 In mercy manifest my innocence.

BARON.

And dost thou yet assert thine innocence? —  
 The knife, the cloak, the kerchief, known to be  
 Her property you murder'd; — think on that.

HENRY.

Strong proofs indeed! and yet I'm innocent.  
 The cloak was mine: but for the bloody knife  
 And kerchief in the cloak; —

BARON.

Ay, those I mean; —

HENRY.

How they came there indeed I do not know.

BARON.

How came *you* there at such a time, disguis'd?

For I am told that, sculking like a thief  
 Among the tombs, and muffled in a cloak,  
 Thou wast discover'd? --- Dost thou turn away,  
 Without reply. — Yet I've a question more :  
 My information tells me that you gain'd  
 Admission to my garden ; is that true?

HENRY.

This I fear'd most.—

BARON.

And say, what did you there?

HENRY.

Where, my good lord?

BARON.

— Within my garden-walls :  
 Wast thou not there? wilt thou deny that too?

HENRY.

I will not answer ; pardon me, my lord.

BARON.

Silence then condemns thee, villain! — Yes :  
 Thou hast bewitch'd my daughter with thy tongue,  
 Or else by charm or philter gain'd her heart,  
 And therefore murder'd *her*, before seduc'd,  
 To make way for my child.—

HENRY.

— Hear me, O Heav'n!

BARON.

To Heav'n dost thou appeal? It hears thee not,  
 Young hypocrite. Holy Saint George! so young,  
 And so abandon'd! — thou art lost indeed.  
 Hadst thou but come, and come with innocence,  
 A suitor to me for my daughter's hand,  
 So much I lov'd thee then, — she should have found  
 No cause for tears: But now, the time is past;  
 Disgrace and infamy are all thy lot.  
 Go, if thou canst; go then, reflect and pray,  
 And make thy peace with Heav'n: for short's the time  
 Allotted thee on earth. — Farewell, farewell.

*Henry.*

HENRY.

Could I hear this and live? is't possible?  
 And do I still exist, or is it all  
 Indeed a dream? So near to happiness,  
 And with a giant's arm hurl'd down at once  
 To the abyss of shame, of infamy! [Benedict enters the prison, unseen by Henry.]  
 To death, nay more, a dog-like death! oh, oh!  
 Let me not think; for that will make me mad.  
 Hear me, ye saints; hear me, ye pow'rs above!  
 In mercy slay me, or in providence  
 Clear to the world this awful mystery,  
 And suffer not the dread award of guilt  
 To blast the guiltless! — No; I have no hope---

*Benedict. Henry.*

BENEDICT.

—Unhappy youth, then 'tis in vain I come ;  
 For he who has no hope, is lost indeed :  
 And why should I unfold to such a mind  
 The ceaseless joys of vast futurity,  
 And shew the path which never trav'ler pass'd  
 Without the full fruition of his hope ?  
 If hope be dead, life is a worthless dreg,  
 And all beyond, a chasm dark and wide  
 Replete with horror, dreadful to explore.

HENRY.

O holy father, welcome. Pardon me ;  
 I saw you not, till waken'd by your speech :  
 A melancholic stupor numbs my soul,  
 And deadens all my senses to the hope  
 Of justice *here*. —

BENEDICT.

— Beyond the grave indeed  
 It shall be found : but even now, perchance,  
 Those pow'rs on whom dependence should be plac'd,  
 Are working for thee : — let me tell thee, son,  
 Despondency is oft the mark of guilt.

HENRY.

What, short of miracle, can clear my fame?—  
 The murderer himself, whoe'er he be,



Secure in my disgrace, will stand aloof,  
 And soothe the hell within him, till perchance  
 Some future deed of darkness shall consign  
 The wretch to justice, and bring this to light. —  
 Ere that can happen, I his substitute,  
 Expos'd to all the gaping multitude,  
 A spectacle of horror, overwhelm'd  
 In death with curses, must untimely fall!

BENEDICT.

Compose your mind; be calm, do not despair :  
 For though the clouds of dark adversity  
 Surround thy path ; if thou be'st innocent,  
 Take courage, and remember, Heav'n is just.

HENRY.

But Heav'n has left me to my wayward fate.

BENEDICT.

Such words as those become not Christian lips :  
 Eternal Justice never delegates  
 Its vengeance to another. — Fate, my son,  
 And destiny, are deities unknown  
 In Paradise, nor ever did exist  
 But in the fertile brain of mortal man,  
 To vain imaginations ever prone. — —  
 But come with me ; and, nearer to the light,  
 I'll read thee somewhat fitting for thine ear.

END OF THE THIRD PART.

THE  
**Test of Guilt.**

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THE FOURTH PART.

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INSIDE OF THE CHURCH: — THE ALTAR WITH THE CORPSE OF DOROTHY ON A BIER BEFORE IT; — THE CLOAK, THE KERCHIEF, AND THE KNIFE, LAID BY HER SIDE, AND FULLY EXPOSED TO THE VIEW.

*The Baron. Benedict.*

BARON.

**How** did you find him?

BENEDICT.

— Quite aston'd with grief: —

Unconscious of my presence, I o'erheard  
His anxious pleading with the saints above;  
He call'd them all, in agony of soul,  
To witness to his innocence, — and in such sort

As suits not guilty minds — then, like a child,  
 With patience bland he listen'd to my speech,  
 And, with full hope of future happiness,  
 Submissive bow'd his head, and waits his doom.

## BARON.

All these indeed are marks of innocence ; —  
 But for those fatal witnesses of guilt,  
 I would unlock his chains. — And, father, now,  
 At thy request, th' ordeal is prepar'd :  
 I grant thee this appeal. What, tho' it claims  
 With me no faith ? by custom authoriz'd,  
 Let it be made : at least, this good results,  
 We better satisfy the common mind.

## BENEDICT.

Experience, good my lord, has often prov'd  
 That Providence, in such appeals as these,  
 Has manifested suddenly its pow'r,  
 And struck the guilty mind with sharp remorse,  
 Enforc'd confession, or abash'd the heart,  
 That, coward-like, th' offender has shrunk back  
 Confus'd, and manifested signs of guilt  
 Too plain to be mistaken.—

## BARON.

— I indeed  
 Have heard such tales. — Well, father, then proceed.

## BENEDICT.

Before the holy altar lies the corpse :  
 Here let th' accused come, and come with him

All his accusers, no exception made :  
 They all must touch the body : 'Tis with us  
 To scrutinize with care each countenance ;  
 For then 'twill be an index of the heart,  
 Unless the heart be callous to all good,  
 Devoid of feeling, nay, be chang'd to stone.

BARON.

Proceed: and may success clear up my doubt!  
 But miracles, I ween, are out of date.

BENEDICT.

Let young Fitzhugh approach, and bring with him  
 All his accusers. — Now begin the rites.

*The Baron. Benedict. Henry. Grim.  
 Clowns. Servants, &c.*

HENRY FIRST ENTERS; AFTER HIM, GRIM, THE CLOWNS, WITH  
 THE BARON'S SERVANTS; THEN THE PRIESTS' PROCESSION,  
 SINGING THE FOLLOWING DIRGE; AND, WHEN RANGED ON  
 BOTH SIDES OF THE ALTAR, CONCLUDE WITH THE CHORUS.

**Dirge.**

Holy saints and martyrs bright,  
 Blessed angels, sons of light,  
 Protect and save the innocent:  
 For you alone can give relief;  
 Disperse the cloud, and heal his grief;  
*Protect and save the innocent.*

THE TEST OF GUILT.

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But with compunction wring the heart  
Of guilt, and let the murd'rer feel  
From conscience' sting the bitter smart,  
Sharper than darts of steel.

*Justice must be satisfied.*

And when he shall, with impious hand,  
Presume to touch the breathless maid;  
May horror wave her burning brand,  
And make the iron heart afraid!

*Justice shall be satisfied.*

BENEDICT.

Henry Fitzhugh, come forward: — Touch the corpse:  
May holy Saints protect the innocent!

HENRY.

Thy mangled body, Dorothy, I touch,  
And make with all my soul appeal to heav'n!  
Ah, could those ghastly wounds but speak, they would  
Proclaim mine innocence! — But I submit.

BENEDICT.

Pass on, my son: — You see, no change appears. — [Aside to the Baron.  
Come forward his accusers: and first thou, [To Grim,  
Most loud against him, touch, and make appeal.

GRIM.

Why should I touch her? No, I will not yield  
To such fond superstition: — I stand not  
Within the pale of accusation; — no. —

M

## THE TEST OF GUILT.

BENEDICT.

What then can hinder thee to make appeal?  
If thou be guiltless, Heaven is thy friend.

GRIM.

Or friend or foe, I will not make appeal.

BENEDICT.

Thou art afraid; thy conscience is not clear.

GRIM.

'Tis false, — I'm innocent: — Well, if I must  
Join in the folly --- What is to be done?

BENEDICT.

Look up to heav'n, and touch the breathless corpse.

*[Grim strikes his hand down suddenly, and then starts from the body.]*

RALPH.

See, where Grim touch'd, the blood has gush'd afresh! ---

GRIM.

Hah! what's the matter?—

RALPH.

— Say, what ails thee, Grim?

GRIM.

Is she alive?

RALPH.

— Alive indeed! art mad?

No, no, she is in truth as cold as clay.

GRIM.

Dare you, — or you, — or dare the boldest here,  
Accuse *me* of the murder? - - -

DICK.

— Oh, not I.

BENEDICT.

Did you mark that, my lord?

BARON.

— These are strong signs  
That conscience is awaken'd in his breast,  
And stings him to the soul: there's more in this  
Than yet we know of: — surely he's concern'd.

RALPH.

What ails thee, Grim?

GRIM.

— Am *I* her murderer? - - -

RALPH.

Who is't accuses you? — the man is mad.

BARON.

He does accuse himself: — Seize on him there:  
They shall be both confin'd: — And hark you, sir,  
Your life shall answer for't if they escape.

## THE TEST OF GUILT.

GRIM.

Wherefore confin'd?—The weakness you have seen,  
 Is nature's failing, such as might have chanc'd  
 To you, — or you, my lord, — or any man. —  
 My mother, great with me, and near her time,  
 Was frighten'd by a corpse: — from her entail'd,  
 I feel a secret horror at the touch  
 Of one that's dead; a shiv'ring fit succeeds  
 Involuntary, and my curdled blood  
 Scarce vibrates through my veins: — It is not guilt  
 Unmans me thus: I shall be well anon.—

BARON.

So much the better: — Take them both away. —  
 I'm half a convert: — See how guilt unmans  
 The stubborn heart: for guilty sure he is,  
 In part at least. — — Would you aught with me? —

[Henry and Grim are  
 conveyed out.

[To Jenny, who, during the  
 transaction, had entered  
 the church, and stands curt-  
 seying before the Baron.

JENNY.

So please your honour, be not angry then. —

BARON.

With thee, I trust I shall not: — Pray speak on.

JENNY.

That knife, —

BARON.

— What knife? —

JENNY.

That lies all bloody there, —



BARON.

Well, what of that, my child? Speak, boldly speak.

JENNY.

— Belong'd to my dear father. —

BARON.

— How! that knife?

JENNY.

Indeed forsooth, your honour. —

BARON.

— And if so,  
Tell us without reserve, how came it here?

JENNY.

Indeed I'll tell thee truth. — Last Lammas-day,  
As I was milking, Grim came down the Lane,  
And, leaning by the cherry-tree, he said,  
“ How sweetly, Jenny, do you sing to-night !”  
(For I was singing.) —

BARON.

— Well ; go on, go on.

JENNY.

He told me, that he lov'd me better far  
Than mistress Dorothy, the clerk's fine daughter.

BARON.

What answer, prithee, didst thou make to that ?

JENNY.

I laugh'd outright, and thought, as I'm alive,  
That he was joking : for, your honour knows, —  
And all the village knows, he lov'd the girl ;  
Bought her new ribbands, and she work'd his shirts  
At wrists and collars with blue silk, your honour.

BARON.

Well, but the knife —

JENNY.

—After I had done

My milking, please your honour, I went in ;  
He follow'd me : and so it was, perchance,  
No soul was in the house but he and I :—  
And he would kiss me : — Now, in deed and truth,  
I thought no harm on't : and what could I do ?

BARON.

I do believe thee ; prithee then, go on :  
For this, it seems, does not concern the knife.

JENNY.

Oh yes, your honour, but indeed it does :  
For you must know, the soleing of his hose  
Was parted at the bottom, and hung down :  
He ask'd me for a knife to cut it off ;  
And so I fetch'd him that — that very knife.

BARON.

But having us'd it, wherefore did he not  
Again return it ?

JENNY.

— La, he was foolish ;—

And swore, if I refus'd another kiss,  
 I should not have the knife: — I did refuse.  
 Meantime, my father came into the yard ;  
 And Grim, not wishing to be seen, went out  
 Through the back orchard, and he took with him  
 The knife ; indeed. —

BARON.

— Why did you suffer that ?

JENNY.

My mother's husband is a surly man :  
 I fear'd his anger, if it had been known  
 That Grim had been with me : — and la, indeed,  
 It was no fault of mine ; — and for that cause  
 I dar'd not interrupt him : — — — That 's the knife.

BARON.

But why so positive ? — another knife  
 May in all points be made resembling this.

JENNY.

Indeed, your honour, I do know it well ;  
 It was my dear, dear father's. —

BARON.

— By what sign ?

JENNY.

Upon the haft is mark'd the letter A,  
 With studs of latten. —

BARON.

— But art thou sure  
 It was that letter ? pray, be circumspect.

JENNY.

I be no scholar ; but so I have been told :  
And from the top, two of the studs be lost.

BARON.

'Tis even so : Look at it, and be sure.

JENNY.

Oh yes, forsooth, your honour, I am sure ;  
Yes, yes, I'm very sure this is the knife.

BARON.

Well, go thou in ; we'll send for thee anon :  
Be ready at the call ; — nor say thou aught  
Of what has pass'd.

JENNY.

— Oh no indeed, forsooth.

*Benedict. The Baron.---Grim, &c.*

BENEDICT.

Mysterious are the ways of Providence :  
And by what slender means it often works  
To punish guilt and save the innocent!—  
I much suspected Grim, and for his sake  
Entreated this ordeal. I have watch'd  
His countenance, and saw, or thought I saw,  
The marks of guilty fear thereon imprest.  
Th'event has prov'd, that I was not deceiv'd :  
And this clear evidence will tend to prove  
He had at least his share in this black deed.

BARON.

In part it may: but foul suspicion still  
 Rests with Fitzhugh, nor is hereby remov'd:  
 Nay, such a partner, too, in such a crime,  
 I'd almost said, adds much unto its weight. — —  
 Ho! who waits? Let Grim be brought before us:  
 We'll take him unawares: perchance he may  
 Confess his guilt and clear the mystery. — — [Gregory and Launcelot lead in Grim.  
 Come hither, Grim: this holy father and myself observ'd  
 How thou wast agitated at the touch  
 Of yonder breathless body.

GRIM.

— Said I not

'Twas weakness gather'd from my mother's womb?

BARON.

We shall not be o'er-hasty to condemn:  
 For, though this suppositious evidence  
 Be strong against thee, we shall weigh with care  
 What thou canst offer in thine own defence: —  
 And therefore 'tis I do adjure thee now,  
 As thou shalt answer it hereafter, say,  
 How cam'st thou by this knife?

GRIM.

That knife? —

Had I it? — No, no: — let me see that knife: —  
 It is not mine; by heav'n, I had it not,  
 Nor ever saw it, till by Ralph 'twas found  
 In Henry's cloak, and all besmear'd with blood.

N

BARON.

Why dost thou tremble? — Dost thou inherit  
To knives aversion from thy mother's fright?

GRIM.

You question in such sort; so unawares  
You take me, ere my answer can be fram'd.  
You're prejudic'd against me: I am poor,  
And much my character has been traduc'd:  
Yet nothing short, my lord, of proof itself, —  
Proof positive of crime, should bar the door  
Against my liberty.

BARON.

— Short is the time  
That opens wide to thee the prison-door,  
Or bars it yet more closely. --- But the knife ---

GRIM.

I know not of it further than 'twas found  
In Henry's cloak: — I said as much before.

BARON.

How, if we prove you did possess it once? —

GRIM.

That cannot be: — Yet I know not, my lord,  
What false accusers may have been suborn'd  
Against my life; for, Henry has his friends,  
In wealth abundant: — I again declare  
The knife's unknown to me; 'twas never mine.

BARON.

In thy possession never?—

GRIM.

No; never.

BARON.

[Steps aside and leads in Jenny,  
and addresses his speech to her.

Come forward: — nay, fear not; speak thou the truth.

GRIM.

[Perceiving Jenny, turns and speaks aside.

Nay then the dev'l indeed has done his worst.

BARON.

[To Benedict.

Mark that;—the terrors of an evil mind  
Detected in its crimes.

BENEDICT.

Her presence has aston'd him; wretched man!

BARON.

[To Grim.

Why dost thou turn away? why so cast down?  
Can this poor maiden cause so much affright?

GRIM.

Nor she, nor you, my lord:—I'm not afraid,  
Although, indeed, too plainly I perceive  
That simple wench has been prevail'd upon  
To swear away my life. —

JENNY.

—The man is mad:

Why dost thou think so hardly of me now ?  
 You us'd far kinder words but yesterday :  
 You said you lov'd me then ; and surely, now,  
 I will not harm thee, Grim.

GRIM.

— Away, thou fool !

JENNY.

You never *fool'd* me, tho' you oft have tried,  
 And bought me fairings to adorn my hair ;  
 Garlands and girdles too ; and told me then  
 You lov'd me better far than Dorothy,  
 And wish'd her dead.

GRIM.

—Thou liest, impudence.

JENNY.

I do not lie, my lord ; — but, for my sake,  
 He told me often that he wish'd her dead.

BARON.

This knife you know ? —

JENNY.

—I know it well, my lord :

It was my father's : and when he was dead,  
 I claim'd it for a keep-sake : it is mine.

BARON.

If thine, how comes it here ?

JENNY.

— You best can tell ;

[To Grim.



You took it from me, yes, you know you did;  
And, though entreated oft, return'd it not.

GRIM.

False, false as hell! the harlot is suborn'd,  
Suborn'd by Henry; and he had the knife:  
'Tis not with truth consistent, — nay I add  
With reason neither, that a knife of mine  
Should seek his cloak, and be inclosed there.

BARON.

Yes easily, so be it you had join'd  
With him in murder. - - -

GRIM.

— Yes! a likely thing,  
That hot and cold should hastily unite;  
That fire should feed on ice; that hail and snow  
Should kindle flames, and set the world on blaze!  
Yet equally consistent is all this,  
That I, ill-us'd and hated by Fitzhugh,  
Should join in enterprise with him. — No, no;  
False witnesses have stigmatiz'd my fame,  
And nature's weaknesses are held to view,  
As proofs of guilt. — I'm poor, and must submit.

BARON.

These gusts of passion surely are no proofs  
Of innocence: Nor shall thy poverty,  
As thou hast said, in any way impede  
The right that justice claims. — Take him away. — — — [Grim is conveyed out.]

Go to thy mistress ; I have done with thee.—  
 That he in part is guilty, I've no doubt;  
 Nor in the girl's simplicity have found  
 Least cause to disannul her evidence:  
 But still the greatest mystery remains,  
 That minds so opposite could e'er unite.

[To Jenny, who goes out.]

BENEDICT.

Nor did they ever. — See Fitzhugh again,  
 And hear what more the damsel has to say:  
 He often, as it seems, express'd to her  
 His wishes for the death of Dorothy.

BARON.

I did observe so much. — Meantime, go thou  
 And visit Grim : persuade him, if thou canst,  
 To fair confession ; though, in truth, I fear  
 His harden'd heart will not receive th' impress  
 Of aught that's good. But we must not neglect  
 Our duty, though it miss of due success.

BENEDICT.

It is my duty to perform such deeds :  
 And having first officiated here,  
 Where holy mass demands me for a time,  
 I will attend : — Remorse perchance may reach  
 His heart, though hard, and sharp compunction wring  
 The secret from his breast. — My lord, farewell.

TEWIN GREEN.—NICHOLAS'S HOUSE ON ONE SIDE; ON THE  
OTHER, THE ALEHOUSE.

*Osborne. Nicholas.*

OSBORNE.

How now, friend Nicholas? cheer up, my friend.

NICHOLAS.

I pray thee leave me, Osborne.

OSBORNE:

— Leave thee! — why,

'Tis thus with all high spirits, when once cow'd;  
Like flies, in sun-shine ever on the wing,  
You buz most wantonly; — come the first frost,  
With pinions pinch'd, alas! ye mount no more,  
But creep in crannies, and die there o' the hip.

NICHOLAS.

Your gibes are quite unpleasant, and ill-tim'd,—  
Disgustful as your sermons us'd to be.

OSBORNE.

But I would have you keep a middle path:  
For-ever boozing, singing, (nay, 'tis true,)  
And dancing also, like a merry sot,  
Was full unseemly; and no less, I ween,  
This constant weeping, this despondency.

NICHOLAS.

The prop of my old age is fallen low ;  
And what remains of life, is nothing worth.

OSBORNE.

Nay, think not so ; give not such way to grief,  
To useless grief: for, could thy tears recall  
The dead to life, I then should say, Weep on.

NICHOLAS.

Thou art no parent, and thou canst not feel  
The pangs that rend a hapless father's breast.

OSBORNE.

A daughter's loss, a daughter too belov'd,  
Is truly an affliction hard to bear : —  
But all must die.—

NICHOLAS.

— Not such a dreadful death !  
So cut, so mangled ! --- Oh ! my child, my child !

OSBORNE.

Sit down, I pray thee ; and, at my request,  
Take one small glass of wine. — In faith thou shalt ; —  
I pray sit down. — Bring forth a cup of wine.

NICHOLAS.

No wine for me.—

OSBORNE.

— Why then for me be it.

Within there! did you hear? bring forth the wine. — [The maid enters with the wine and glasses.  
Here 'tis, forsooth.—

OSBORNE.

Why then, forsooth, I hope it is the best.  
Come, come, friend Nicholas, be not so nice :  
I drink to thee : — In truth, 'tis excellent. ---  
Nay but you shall drink once for friendship's sake ;  
I will not be denied.

NICHOLAS.

— Well, if I must—

OSBORNE.

I pray thee mend thy draught.

NICHOLAS.

— I'll drink no more.

OSBORNE.

You did not use to be so bashful, man.  
Nay then I'll press no further : — See where come  
Your old companions. --- What! not wait for them ?

NICHOLAS.

No; let me go ; I can't endure their noise :  
Nonsense vociferated from their lungs,  
Is like the crash of various instruments,  
All loud and out of tune : — I prithee let me go.

OSBORNE.

Have I not heard you swear, that John the Smith

Had wit at will; that Dick the Baker's man  
Sang like a nightingale; that Ralph the Hind  
Made you more merry than the devil's droll,  
In our town mysteries; — and for little Pierce  
The whistling Ploughman ----?

NICHOLAS.

— Cease this waste of words. —

OSBORNE.

Nay, Tom the Hedger too, and honest Will  
The Woodman, your companions, all I've heard ---

NICHOLAS.

By Heav'n, you mad me with your idle talk!  
I am not what I was; I hate all mirth  
And noisy ribaldry: All, all may go, —  
And you to boot, so please you, — to Church-lane,  
And hang yourselves: for there are trees enough  
For every man of you to choose his own.

[Nicholas retires.

*Osborne.*

Alas, poor man! for ~~thou art chang'd~~ indeed.  
Here with the rustics would he dance and sing,  
Full of his jokes, and never better pleas'd  
Than when they jok'd again; — ~~he gave them ale~~  
Was foremost always at the fairs and wakes,  
Promoting mirth and pastimes without end. —  
I'll follow him; for he's ~~gone home~~, I know,  
To weep alone; I'll rouse him, if I can,  
From this death-boding melancholy mood.

END OF THE FOURTH PART.

THE  
**Test of Guilt.**

---

THE FIFTH PART.

---

THE HALL IN THE CASTLE.

*The Baron, followed by Absalom.*

BARON.

COME hither : — 'Tis no good I hear of thee :  
Fye, fye! and thou a man so grown in years,  
To forfeit all our future confidence,  
And, like a traitor in thy country's cause,  
Open the prison-door, and set at large  
A culprit charg'd with murder! Is it so?

ABSALOM.

Such is my accusation.

BARON.

— So I said :

And dost thou know what pains and penalties  
Await thee for this shameful breach of trust?

ABSALOM.

I stood, my lord, young Henry's substitute,  
And risk'd my life for him.

BARON.

— You meant it so ?

ABSALOM.

In truth I did.

BARON.

— And suffer'd his escape ?

ABSALOM.

At least as bad : I'll use no subterfuge ;  
I put him where the means were in his reach ;  
He us'd the means : — I need not say the rest.

BARON.

Thou hast no hope of favour from the court :  
Thy trust betray'd, thine office forfeited,  
Thy goods become my right : thy body too  
The prison claims, therein to be detain'd  
At our liege Sovereign's will : — know'st thou all this ?

ABSALOM.

I know I'm ruin'd, know it well, my lord ;  
And come prepar'd to meet my punishment : —  
Had but the youth escap'd, till time had clear'd  
His innocence, (for innocnt he is,  
My life upon it,) I had died content.



BARON.

Upon some firm foundation, I presume,  
To us unknown, you build this confidence?

ABSALOM.

My lord, I knew him from his infancy ;  
Have known his virtues : He is like a lamb,  
Meek with the lowly ; but a lion's heart  
Appears whene'er protection claims his aid ;  
Friend to the good, sworn enemy to vice.  
The wounds of sorrow he rejoic'd to heal,  
And sought the lonely cottage of distress,  
To comfort the afflicted: yes, my lord,  
He dropp'd with woe the sympathizing tear :  
Yet not contented so ; for well he knew,  
That such gaunt charity availed not  
To those who were ill-cloth'd, and wanted food :  
But to his tears he added gracious deeds ;  
He fed the hungry, and the naked cloth'd,  
And never boasted of the good he did,  
But rather seem'd more humbled by the deed : —  
These are the grounds, my lord, on which I build  
My confidence : and facts I know they are.

BARON.

Well well, go home: your office claims your care: —  
This failure may perchance be overlook'd,  
Because thou hast been faithful hitherto.  
Away ; I will not suffer a reply:  
By future diligence make manifest  
A thankful heart: another forfeiture

Admits no mercy. — Go; look to it well. [Abraham bows low, and goes out.]  
 Beshrew me, but the good old man has brought  
 The tears into mine eyes! By some strange charm,  
 Fitzhugh has gain'd possession of the minds  
 Of all that know him; whether high or low,  
 Or rich or poor, their mouths are fill'd with praise:  
 And with what zeal, tho' simple be his speech,  
 This man has drawn a noble character,  
 And plac'd it to his friend! — In part, I know,  
 The colouring is just: Could we but wipe  
 This foul pollution clearly from his fame,  
 I'd clasp him to my bosom, and rejoice  
 That such a man had won my daughter's heart.

*Lancelot. The Baron.*

LANCELOT.

Pardon my interruption, gracious lord;  
 But, all unknown to us, the pris'ner Grim  
 Has swallow'd poison: — Yonder now he lies  
 In agonies of death, and raving mad,  
 He utters blasphemies, and swears he sees  
 The fiends of hell: — But now, he call'd  
 For father Benedict, and then for you.

BARON.

Send for the leech; he must not perish so: — —  
 If he be guilty, Justice has her claim,  
 And blood demands atonement publicly:

[Lancelot goes out.]

A murderer should die a murderer's death,  
 In the fair face of day expos'd, and made  
 To others an example. — Ho, within! —  
 Haste thou to Benedict; his presence here  
 Is instantly requir'd. —

[A servant approaches.

[Servant goes out.

— So near to death,  
 The truth may be reveal'd, and by some means  
 The veil of this dark mystery remov'd.

THE ALBHOUSE ON THE GREEN.

*Pierce the Ploughman. Ralph.*

PIERCE.

Ralph, thou art serious now. —

RALPH.

— Indeed I am,  
 And look you, can be so when time requires.  
 Go to; I'm thinking deeply. —

PIERCE.

— Thinking too!  
 Thy cattle then have stray'd: and what of that?  
 The pindar will, I doubt not, give account.

RALPH.

Would all my cattle had been in the pound,

And I oblig'd to pay for their release,  
Rather than Henry — —

PIERCE.

— Yes, yes ; there indeed  
I am your man : think on, think on, friend Ralph.

RALPH.

We foolish people, Pierce, are often wrong :  
So may I be ; and yet it seem'd as plain  
As mine own nose, that Grim - - - I hate the name —

PIERCE.

Go to ; we must not hate him : he's a man.

RALPH.

Well : when he touch'd the body, I did think  
It bled afresh. —

PIERCE.

— Some bubbles from the wound  
Near where he touch'd, I certainly did see :  
But when he touch'd, he turn'd his head away,  
And press'd the body hard : — in truth I thought  
He would have fallen. —

RALPH.

— Yes, it was his guilt  
Weigh'd down his hand : for, father Ben'dict says,  
Guilt is more weighty than huge sheets of lead.

PIERCE.

How frightfully he look'd!—

RALPH.

— And did you hear  
His foolish question? Had such clowns as we  
So ask'd, we surely had been laugh'd to scorn:  
But he's a scholar; therefore did it pass:—  
'Is she alive?' said he. How silly 'twas.

PIERCE.

Ay, Ralph:— but here the case is different:  
You think it silly; for you thought no harm;  
*His* conscience whisper'd *murder!*—I have heard  
That he who murders, be he where he may,  
The restless spirit of the party slain  
Is ever in his sight, and holds to view  
Chains, racks, and halters. ---- Whither now away?

*John the Smith. Ralph. Pierce. Dick, &c.*

JOHN.

Oh, here is Ralph, and Pierce: So; heard you not  
What's doing at the castle? Grim, they say,  
Has taken poison, and is like to die.—

DICK.

Yes, and has sent for father Benedict  
To make confession;—

JOHN.

— Ay, and of the murder.

P

RALPH.

Oh yes, in truth this is a likely tale!

DICK.

Indeed 'tis true; the Baron's serving man  
So told me. —

JOHN.

— Ay, 'twas Gregory himself.

TOM.

Yes, that it was; I heard him say the same.

PIERCE.

And why did he take poison?

DICK.

— To be sure,  
To save himself from death.

RALPH AND PIERCE.

Ha! ha! ha!

DICK.

Well, masters, you may laugh: but it is true.

JOHN.

To save himself from being hang'd, he means.

RALPH.

These are strange tidings: Then, is young Fitzhugh  
Found innocent?—

JOHN.

— No, no, they say he'll die.

PIERCE.

How so, if Grim is known to be the rogue?

JOHN.

He also is concern'd. —

DICK.

— Ah, poor young man!

RALPH.

But come, let's to the castle, let's away;  
Come all, what say ye?

ALL.

Yes, agreed, agreed.

THE HALL IN THE BARON'S CASTLE.

*Gregory. Lancelot. --- Perkin, Ralph, &c.*

GREGORY.

O Lancelot, here has been such a coil  
For you and for the leech!

LANCELOT.

Well; he is come.

GREGORY.

What, come but now?— Why, man, 'tis all too late.

LANCELOT.

Is Grim, then, dead? —

GREGORY.

— Yes, dead as a door-nail :

And such a woeful ending I ne'er saw ;  
May holy saints forefend I should again!

LANCELOT.

And did he aught confess?

GREGORY.

— Oh! Lancelot,

The fearful tales which, in my youth, I've heard  
My grandam and her gossips often tell,  
In winter-nights, of goblins haunting men  
Guilty of murder, and with fearful dreams  
Abashing all their courage, — in his end  
Were realiz'd : In raving fits, he swore  
He saw the lake of hell display'd,  
With murder'd Dorothy before his eyes,  
Pointing thereto, and crying for revenge!—

LANCELOT.

Some incoherent ravings like to those,  
He utter'd ere I left him : — Pray, go on.

GREGORY.

I have not mem'ry to detail the half  
Of his outrageous speeches.

LANCELOT.

— Nor should I

Desire to hear them : — What did he confess?



GREGORY.

Why, you must know that father Benedict  
Took all occasions, when an interval  
From horror and despair, and blasphemy,  
Permitted his advice, to urge the need  
Of fair confession as the only means  
For absolution ; working on his mind  
With gentle words,—

LANCELOT.

— To clear Fitzhugh, I hope ?

GREGORY.

Nay, interrupt me not, but hear me out. —  
In agony of mind he did confess  
Himself the murderer — —

LANCELOT.

— And young Fitzhugh — ?

GREGORY.

Have patience, pray ; all shall be known anon. —  
Poor Dorothy, it seems, befool'd by Grim,  
Bore such a testimony of their guilt  
As soon must have told tales : besides all this,  
He like a villain, having gain'd his will  
Of simple Dorothy, soon hated her,  
And paid his court to Jenny :—

LANCELOT.

— She you mean,  
Her ladyship's new servant ?

## THE TEST OF GUILT.

GREGORY.

— Yes, the same: —

And better to effect her ruin too,  
He murder'd Dorothy: — Indeed, indeed he did!

LANCELOT.

Fye on him, what a knave!

GREGORY.

— When you've heard all,

You will say *fye* indeed: The truth is this:  
Young Henry lov'd our lady, and oft came,  
In that same cloak disguis'd, at dead of night,  
To visit her: — my lord knew nought of this: —  
And you must understand, our spruce gallant,  
Unwilling to appear with such a cloak  
Before our lady, hid it in the tomb:  
Grim found it there by accident, it seems:  
Tinge'd it with blood, and, to transfer the guilt  
From his own shoulders, plac'd therein the knife  
And bloody kerchief. —

LANCELOT.

— Then Henry's innocent?

GREGORY.

Yes, as the babe unborn. . . . How now? What noise? — [Clowns within  
exclaim, *Asses!*  
*Asses!* *Asses!*

LANCELOT.

Why, 'tis the village knaves, and sure they're mad.  
What May-game now is toward? — Whence come ye,  
With such a coil, ye loud tumultuous hinds?

[Perkin enters, follow-  
ed by the Clowns.

THE TEST OF GUILT.

F11

RALPH.

We'll tell you presently, good Lancelot.

PERKIN.

But 'tis the Baron's pleasure, Lancelot,  
That they should drink : — Brave doings are in hand :  
Young Henry's innocent !

CLOWNS.

— Huzza! huzza! huzza!

LANCELOT.

Silence your clamour.

RALPH.

— What! When such good news  
Is stirring with us, silence were a shame.

PERKIN.

But I can tell you more. — To-morrow, sirs,  
Young Henry weds the lady Eleanor.

RALPH.

Huzza! Come, Lancelot, good Lancelot,  
Broach a full butt: you shall not find us flinch!

LANCELOT.

No, I'll be sworn : — But fair and softly, sir:  
Before I broach the butt, I must enquire,  
Out of this brave, this noble company, — —

PIERCE.

Go to, go to; you flout us, Lancelot.

## THE TEST OF GUILT.

LANCELOT.

No, not a whit : — but, as before I said,  
I must enquire, who of you all can dance ?

DICK.

Indeed not I.

TOM.

— Nor I.

LANCELOT.

— Ralph, what say you ?

RALPH.

In truth, I be no dancer.

LANCELOT.

— Pierce, you are.

PIERCE.

A likely thing indeed ! —

LANCELOT.

— And you, and you. —

ALL.

No, no ; we cannot dance.

LANCELOT.

Why then, one question more : —  
Which of you all can drink ?

ALL.

— I ; I ; I ; I.

LANCELOT.

Why look you now, my precious drinking men ;  
No dance, no ale. —

RALPH.

— Nay, but that is not fair.

LANCELOT.

Why not ?

RALPH.

— 'Tis Nature teaches us to drink,  
But not to dance, I trow.

LANCELOT.

— And Nature says,  
The cool refreshing stream upon yon Green  
Is better than strong ale : — Go thither then,  
And slake your thirsts : No meat nor drink for you ;  
The high-pil'd trenchers and the brimming horns  
Will beg for customers. — Not dance indeed !  
Farewell, my precious naturals, farewell.

PIERCE.

But, Lancelot, good master Lancelot,  
Hear us but speak : We cannot dance, 'tis true,  
On empty stomachs ; give us drink enough,  
And if we dance not, whip us till we do.

GREGORY.

Silence ! make way : for see, his honour comes.

[Perceiving the Baron leading  
Eleanor in one hand and  
Henry in the other, fol-  
lowed by attendants.

RALPH.

And with him, master Henry.

PIERCE.

Brave Fitzhugh!

JOHN.

God save you, master Henry!

DICK.

— Dear master Henry!

WILL.

Good master Henry! —

ALL.

Huzza! huzza!

GREGORY.

Why sure the clowns will eat him! pray fall back :  
For shame! for shame! give place; do you not see  
You interrupt their honours? — Back, keep back.

*The Baron. Eleanor. Henry. Jenny. At-  
tendants. Clowns.---Benedict. Physician.*

BARON.

Give them full licence, interrupt them not ;  
Their joy becomes them well : The heart 's not sound,  
That feels no joy in such a cause as this,

Where injur'd innocence, without a stain,  
 From calumny set free and falsehoods foul,  
 Shines with redoubled lustre:— You, I trust,  
 My dearest Eleanor, find not their joy,  
 Tho' it be loud, offensive to thine ear?

ELEANOR.

My honour'd lord, it is in truth to me  
 As grateful as the gift of wholesome food  
 To starving men: in it I recognize  
 My dear Fitzhugh's deserving:— To praise him,  
 Is to please me.

BARON.

— And, Henry, art thou dumb?

HENRY.

From deep adversity, from death itself,  
 And worse than death,— a load of infamy,  
 Call'd suddenly to life, to joy supreme,  
 My mind is overwhelm'd, and by degrees  
 My spirits must expand to happiness,  
 Or burst the cords that hold them. — Good my lord,  
 And dearest lady, darling of my soul,  
 What can I say? Words are inadequate  
 To paint the vast sensations of my soul;  
 In wonder, ecstasy, and gratitude  
 I'm lost, — and doubt reality itself,  
 (So far it has outstripp'd my utmost hope,)  
 Lest, like a vision, it should fade away,  
 And leave me once again to death and woe.  
 My full heart labours: — Gracious Heav'n, to thee

[Kneeling.]

I would be thankful;—and, my lord, to thee;— [Kissing the Baron's hand.  
 And then to thee, fair excellence; but thus and thus [Kissing her hand repeatedly.  
 Can only pay the debt.

ELEANOR.

Rise, flatterer ;  
 (For thou dost flatter ;) --- and I must forgive.

JENNY.

And, good your ladyship, forgive me too; [Kneeling to Eleanor.  
 Indeed it griev'd me when I saw you weep :  
 But sure I thought no harm. —

ELEANOR.

Rise, my good wench ;  
 For thou hast been in truth my Henry's friend,  
 And, tho' unconscious of the good thou 'st done,  
 Shalt never want a friend while I survive.

JENNY.

I thank your ladyship: To live with you,  
 And be your servant, is the whole I ask.

ELEANOR.

'Tis well ; thy services shall not be lost.

HENRY.

And may I now, my lord, without offence  
 Entreat for Absalom ? He is my friend.

BARON.

Entreat thou may'st, my son ; but 'tis too late.



HENRY.

Nay, heav'n forefend! No harm, I hope, has reach'd  
The good old man? —

BARON.

The traitor Absalom —

HENRY.

Oh, pardon me, my lord; indeed, indeed,  
He is no traitor; all the crime was mine.

BARON.

Thou art mistaken: half the guilt at least  
Belongs to him; I have it on his word:  
But for thy sake, (for, trust me, 'twere not just  
To punish him and set you free): — Well then,  
I have restor'd to him his offices,  
Remitted all his fines, —

HENRY.

— May holy saints  
And hallow'd angels, guardians of the just,  
Reward you for this favour! —

BARON.

— Yes, my son,  
I love him for your sake; he is your friend.  
Good father, you are welcome. —

[To Benedict, who enters with the Physician.]

— Oh, you come too late.

[To the Physician.]

Go, some of you; bear hence the murderer,  
And in the first cross-way dig out a grave,

And therein be his breathless carcase thrown :  
 The post that pierces through him, shall be cas'd  
 With plates of iron, and thereon engrav'd  
 The blazon of his crimes. — Go, see it done.

PHYSICIAN.

But not as yet, my lord : — Grim is not dead.

BARON.

Not dead ! — This holy father and myself  
 Were by him at the time he breath'd his last.

PHYSICIAN.

'Twas in appearance only : For a time  
 The spring and functions of his life are held  
 Suspended by the power of medicine,  
 But will resume their offices anon. —  
 Some few days past, the culprit came to me,  
 Complaining much of vermin, which by night  
 Pester'd his chamber ; and intreated much  
 Some doses of strong poison : But such means  
 Of death I thought not fit to trust with him ;  
 And mix'd a potion to excite a sleep  
 Resembling death, yet not destroy the life.

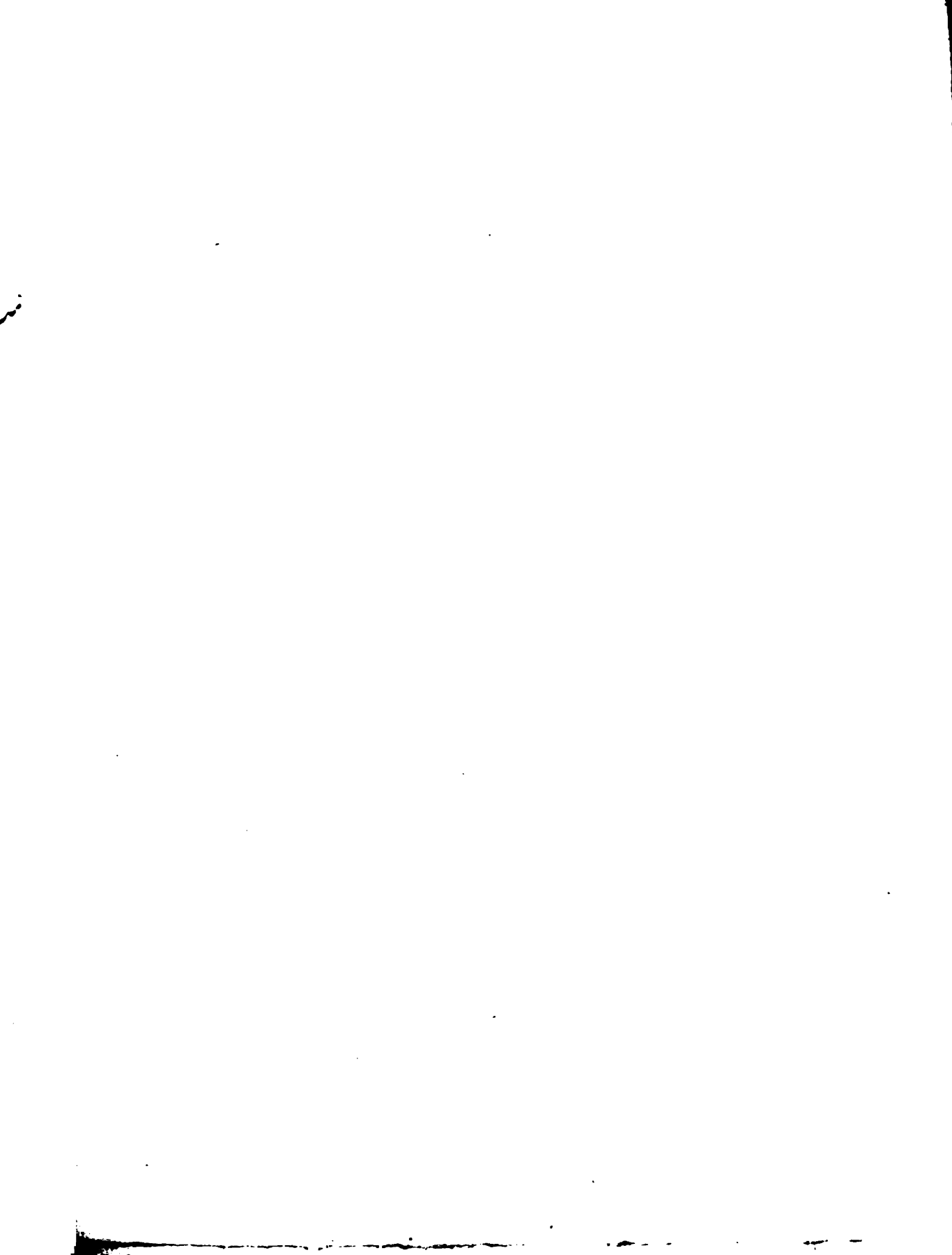
BARON.

'Twas wisely done, and claims our warmest thanks :  
 The cries of justice shall be satisfied :  
 Nay more ; perchance, by length'ning out the life,  
 Tho' only some few hours, of this bad man,  
 Reflection may excite him to repent,  
 Though late, — and from perdition save his soul.

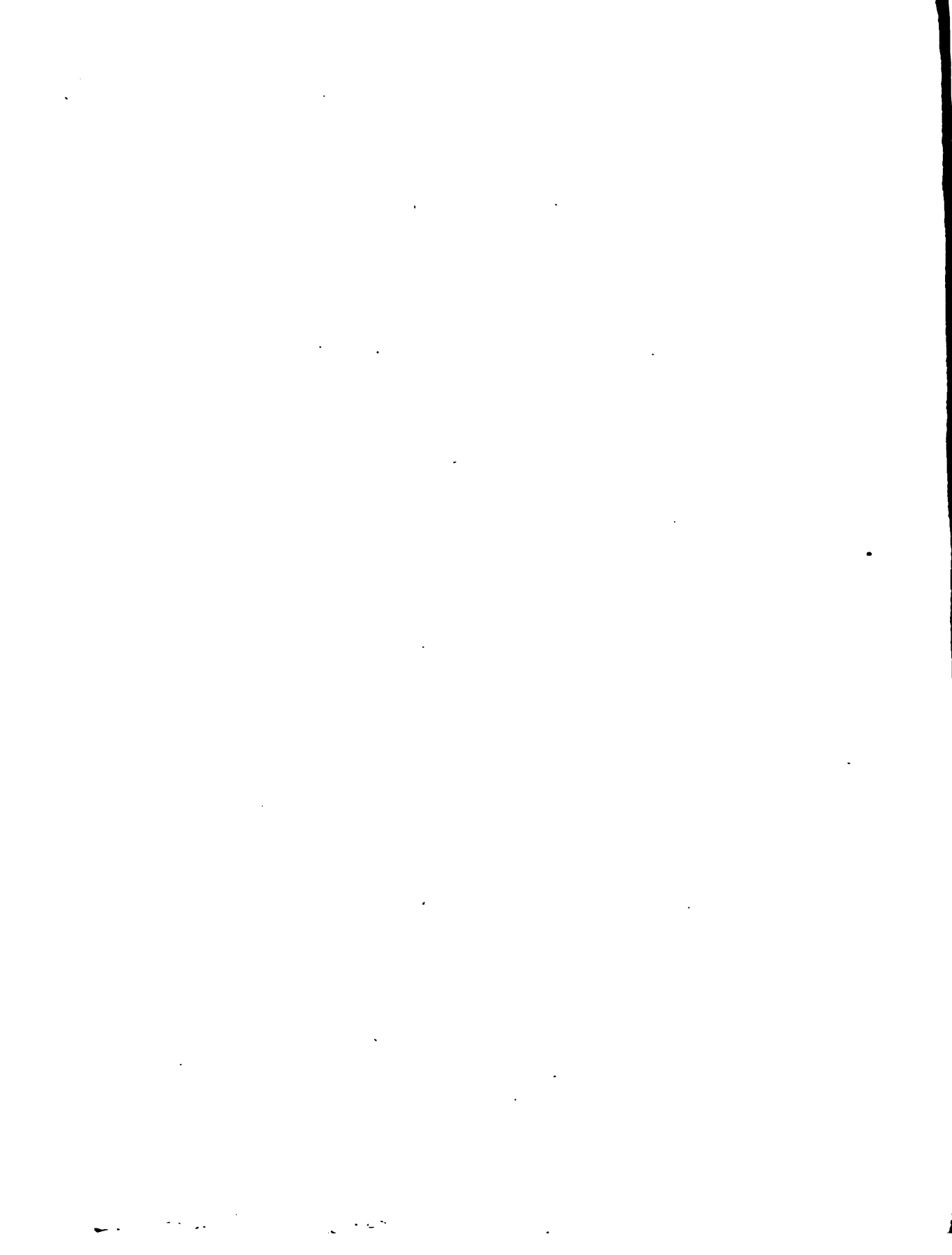
BENEDICT.

Amen, amen! — From these strange accidents,  
We may at least this useful lesson learn :  
“ That, tho’ the ways of Providence be dark,  
Inscrutable, and irksome to us oft;  
Yet, by the very means that we disdain,  
Our good is often work’d, and justice brought  
To punish guilt, to free the innocent,  
To close the mouth of insolent complaint,  
And prove, howe’er we judge, that Heav’n is just.”

=====  
**THE END.**  
=====



**THE BUMPKINS' DISASTER.**



THE  
**BUMPKINS' DISASTER;**

OR

**The Journey to London :**

Containing the

*WHIMSICAL ADVENTURES*

OF

**PLOUGHSHARE AND CLODPOLL;**

*Incidental to which are described,*

**A CONSULTATION OF THE FAIRIES;**

INCLUDING ALSO

***THE LEGENDARY HISTORY OF WALTHAM CROSS.***

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**A Collection of Fragments.**

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**BY THE LATE MR. JOSEPH STRUTT,**

AUTHOR OF

THE REGAL AND ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY OF ENGLAND; HORDA ANGEL-CYNNAN,  
OR MANNERS AND CUSTOMS OF THE ENGLISH; CHRONICLE OF ENGLAND;  
DICTIONARY OF ENGRAVERS; DRESSES AND HABITS OF THE ENGLISH; AND  
GLIG-GAMENA ANGEL-THEOD, OR SPORTS AND PASTIMES OF THE ENGLISH.

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## P R E F A C E.

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IN presenting this Collection of Fragments to the notice of a discerning Public, it is necessary to solicit their candid indulgence, both for the defective state in which it appears before them, and for the occasional misconceptions of the Author's meaning, that may probably occur, notwithstanding the unwearied attention that has been bestowed in preparing it for the press. The Tale, in its manuscript state, was perused by some learned Friends of the Author, who pronounced it worthy of being printed: it is therefore, with deference, submitted to public criticism, which, it is hoped, will return a censure as lenient as may be consistent with candour and veracity.

This little Tale is founded on circumstances no less singular than true; a brief detail of which here follows. — Two substantial Farmers, C\*\*n and H\*\*n, who are in this Tale called *Ploughshare* and *Clodpoll*, resided, about thirty years ago, at a small village, nearly four miles distant from the town of Hertford. During the late American war, when parties ran high, and politicks almost exclusively engrossed the attention of men in every class of society; no meeting was convened, but public measures usually became the theme of discussion; — from the tavern to the pothouse, from the barber's shop to the carpeted parlour; from town to country, the uproar extended, and houses and streets rang with the clamours of the disputants: and blows not unfrequently terminated the wordy strife. — Precisely such was the posture of affairs at the club-meeting that was holden at Hertford Town, of which the heroes of the subsequent Tale were members. Discord reared her baleful pinions; and, in her airy flight, dispersed the seeds of contention among this little assembly, which was assembled from different parts of the country for many miles around. — Heretofore the Farmers had met, and transacted their business; took their glass, sang their song, and retired to their respective homes in perfect fellowship and harmony:

----Now, the factious toast on one side, and the cry of loyalty on the other ; — here the condemnation, there the approval of men in power, and their measures ; — reproachful and sarcastic speeches levelled even against Majesty itself on one part, heard and replied to with indignation on the other ; engendered such a scene of disturbance, that the good old times of wonted fellowship seemed totally to have passed away,—never to return. Impressed with this notion, our two worthies, *Ploughshare* and his friend *Cleopoll*, took it into their heads, that no way remained to bring about a reformation of these evils, but by laying the case before the King ; and this they resolved to undertake themselves. For this purpose, as the Tale narrates, they proceeded to London ; where, through their ignorance and home-bred manners, and the oddity of the business that drew them from their homes, (which of course they disclosed to every one with whom they fell into conversation,) they were duped, ridiculed (though they had not the wit to discern it), robbed, and drawn into many awkward predicaments. — Being lovers of good cheer, and constant friends to the full-charged glass, it may be supposed that, among their new-scraped acquaintance, at whatever inn they put up while in town, they were not sparing in the use of strong liquors, and oftentimes plunged themselves into a state of inebriety. This was really the case : and frequent intoxication, and the loss of their money, with which the Farmers took good care to have their pockets well lined, was the issue of their journey to town ; except that, in their own village, and before their rustic companions, even to the present time, the wiseacres talk of the services that they would have rendered their King and Country, with as much self-importance as though the mad-headed scheme they projected (though baffled by adverse fate) really had been calculated to have rescued the State from impending ruin : and among the listening boobies they acquire no little applause.

This, however improbable it may appear, is a real statement of the case : the Farmers (it is again repeated) actually left their homes,

and came up to London, that they might talk to the King face to face, and petition him to redress certain evils, in the capacity of a private man, that actually would have required the interference of the Legislature.—The adventures that the Bumpkins met with at the Palace (unfortunately left by the Author in a very unfinished state) may require a brief explanation. The strange remarks that they make on the *throne*, mistaking it for a *bedstead*, and blundering upon a yeoman of the guard for the *King*, afforded not a little amusement to the guides who were shewing them the rooms and decorations of the palace : and if these egregious misconceptions diverted the conductors, the communications that the Farmers made of the motives that led them to town, produced equal astonishment upon their hearers ; who, to humour the joke still farther, (though they convinced the blockheads of their error respecting the throne,) led them to believe that the personage whom they took for the King, is in reality *not* His Majesty, but a noble *Lord*, his Majesty's near *relation* : this, our wisecracs readily credited, and related to him the business they came about, with much humility and obeisance ; while the *lord* yeoman promised that they should have redress, and that he would himself report their errand to His Majesty. His *Lordship*, however farther informed the Bumpkins, that if they would see the King themselves, they might meet with him in the city, he being gone thither, to pay his morning visits, and might certainly be found at the Mansion-house, if they set forward in haste. — The Farmers accordingly, with many bows and thanks to his *Lordship* for his information, addressed themselves to their journey ; and with as much speed as they could travel through the London-streets, they proceeded to the Mansion-house. Arrived there, they posted along the passage that leads to the kitchen, and, with much assumed importance, demanded of the servants of the Lord Mayor instant admission to the King, who (as his Majesty's noble *relation* had informed them) is on a visit to His Lordship their master. The servants at first conceived the Farmers to be insane, and were for turning them out into the street ; but in a little time the Bumpkins worked them-

selves into the good graces of these laughter-loving domesticks, who now began to entertain a different opinion of these singular visitants; and, learning from their rustic communications the full purport of their errand, they resolved still farther to gratify their mirth at our heroes' expence: accordingly the butler and the cook ushered them into the kitchen, and feasted them sumptuously, and treated them with plenty of good liquor: when at length the Farmers, who spared not the use of the good cheer, were completely intoxicated; and at last, staggering homeward to their inn, their stock of money being nearly exhausted, they, the next morning when they had regained a tolerable degree of sobriety, were constrained to go back to their homes, to equip themselves afresh, for a second journey, which they now determined to undertake. — The reception the Bumpkins met with in their families on their return, must be left to the reader's imagination. It can, however, be added, that they never undertook this second journey.

The reader will be pleased to observe, that throughout this Tale, he will find *Ploughshare* expressing his sentiments, and delivering his narrations, in language far exceeding the style of an unlettered rustic: this is accounted for in the Second Part, where the conversation takes place between the Fairies; the Author there assigning to the Fairy *Robin Goodfellow*, the task of prompting his hero's speech, and supporting him in the part he has undertaken.

It is trusted, the indulgent Reader will excuse the very imperfect state in which the fifth part of this Tale is presented to his notice: diligent search has been made among the Author's unpublished papers; but no vestige of any other particulars for a farther completion of it can be discovered: And if, on the whole, the whimsical traits of character exhibited in the Tale, and the droll adventures that befel the heroes of it, excite the smile of satisfaction; and if the graver parts of it, where the Author borrows his remarks from history or tradition, be calculated to please; the only end that was aimed at in making it public, will be answered.

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THE  
**Bumpkins' Disaster.**

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PART I.

---

*Politics in a Country Club.*

**I** SING the Heroes, and their worth proclaim,  
Who much deserve, tho' yet unknown to fame :  
How, unabash'd by fear when danger frown'd,  
They fac'd the tempest, and maintain'd their ground ;  
What mighty perils boldly they withstood ;  
What toils exerted for their Country's good : —  
Those wand'ring Spirits call I to my aid,  
Who dance their midnight rounds in wood or glade,  
Or haunt the flow'ry banks where rivers stream,  
And range the meadows by the Moon's pale beam : —  
Elves, Fairies, Phantoms, Goblins of the night,  
Or Sylvan Sylphs, — who of you most delight

In Epic Song, to greatness dedicate,  
 And noble deeds, or regal pomp and state;  
 Ye I invoke, from whom the sources sprang  
 Of bold adventures, such as Poets sang  
 In days of yore, when brave Pendragon's son  
 The sceptre sway'd, and such bright glories won.  
 Then oft by night appear'd the airy throng,  
 And favour'd Merlin join'd the solemn song:  
 Nor ceas'd the strain, when into foreign lands  
 Bold Cœur-de-Leon led the martial bands,  
 And, cas'd in iron all, the dread array,  
 With lawless Pagans fought, and won the day;  
 Nor when France trembled at the dreaded name  
 Of Edward; nor when warlike Henry came,  
 Mighty in arms, who that proud kingdom won,  
 And gave the sceptre to his heartless son.

If Ancient Records are to be believ'd,  
 Or what Tradition still asserts, receiv'd;  
 In this fair Island your fantastic train,  
 Time past, existed: If they yet remain,  
 Unseen, among us, why, in sleep secure,  
 Can sloth indulge, or diligence endure  
 The wakeful toil, unaided? why refrain  
 To punish sloth, and diligence maintain?  
 Why ceases now the soul-enliv'ning sound,  
 Where oft in dance ye trod th' enamell'd ground?  
 Is it because, in these degen'rate days,  
 The noble spirit of the land decays;  
 And foul corruption, eager to restrain  
 Our native Freedom, points alone to gain?

Not so when ancient Honour shone most bright:  
 For, Honour bade the sons of valour fight;

Attendant conquest crown'd their deed with fame,  
And gave the hero's best reward,—a deathless name—

If ye indeed exist, bright airy throng,  
My invocation hear: Assist the Song;  
On me the gifts of Poetry bestow,  
And bid the verse in sprightly numbers flow.

ONE lovely morning in the month of May,  
When bright Aurora usher'd in the day,  
And tuneful Nightingales, who all night long  
Had warbled in the grove, forbore their song;  
The early Lark with joy their place supply'd,  
And Nature smil'd, adorn'd with vernal pride.

From cities far remov'd, and pomp, and state;  
To courts unknown, secluded from the great,  
In rural shade,—where, unadorn'd by art,  
Pure, simple Nature glads the rustic's heart,  
Our Heroes both were born;—nor needed they  
The Graces there; bright Fortune claim'd the day:—  
On them serenely yellow Ceres smil'd,  
And with increasing wealth their toils beguil'd:  
Foreseeing, haply, what in future days  
By Time was destin'd, and to them what praise,  
She lent to Fortune her assistant hand,  
Fill'd all their barns, and fertiliz'd their land:  
Retirement saw their first approach to fame,  
With titles grac'd and magisterial name:  
For, all the parish-offices they serv'd  
With diligence, and praise in each deserv'd.

Near Hertford Town, where Memrim winds his way  
Thro' fertile meads, they first beheld the day:  
And there well known at clubs and jovial feasts,  
Where drink flows round, and men are chang'd to beasts,

When Hertford Mayor, elected to his seat,  
 First shines in office, and bestows his treat.  
 Nor absent they when opposition gave  
 Election glory, and to peace a grave ;  
 When noisy riot craz'd the sober mind,  
 And Bacchus made sharp-sighted reason blind ;  
 Then, when corruption meditates the blow,  
 While sense is absent and the spirits flow,  
 By empty promise led, or brib'd with gold, —  
 Religion, Justice, Freedom, all are sold.  
 Accurs'd honours by such arts obtain'd,  
 The fruits of vice and tumult unrestrain'd ;  
 Where perjur'd baseness with loud triumph rules,  
 And hails her faithful subjects knaves and fools !  
 At Hertford market, weekly must they dine ;  
 When, cheer'd by food and heated by the wine,  
 Their brother Farmers claim, without excuse,  
 The ancient privilege to heap abuse  
 On Lords and Commons, Patriots and Kings,  
 Without distinction ; noisy nonsense rings  
 In ceaseless peals : — for, Reason claims no place,  
 Where Folly reigns and owns her darling race.  
 Such are the schools where rustic genius first  
 To dullness opens, and imbibes the rust  
 Of self-conceit ; — a pest which swiftly draws  
 The veil o'er Knowledge, and denies her laws ;  
 The schools where Nonsense, in her native clime,  
 First germinates, and, when improv'd by time,  
 Expands her fruitless blossoms broad and gay,  
 For fools to praise, — the phantoms of a day :  
 Where first our tyro's learn'd, with jovial souls,  
 To roar out songs, and empty flowing bowls ;



Next to dispute on subjects most profound,  
And talk of wonders while the toast pass'd round.

So nurtur'd, they surpass'd in eloquence  
Their club-mates all, and shone as men of sense  
On club-feast days, when deep immerg'd they sat  
In noisy argument on this and that ;  
Important subjects eagerly maintain'd,  
In clouds of smoke and misrule unrestrain'd : —  
But then, no quarrels waiting these accoils,  
Ill blood fomented ; no intestine broils  
Disturb'd their jollity ; good friends they came,  
Got drunk alike, and stagger'd home the same.

Such was their former happiness ; — at last,  
Infernal Discord rais'd the chilling blast,  
To Peace destructive, and with dreadful sway  
Stretch'd out her arms o'er North America :  
Then Britons fought with Britons, (shameful sight!) —  
Record no more, O Fame ; let endless night  
In deep obscurity o'erwhelm the date  
Of annals so disgraceful to the State,  
When Faction rag'd, produc'd by hell-born pride,  
And Anarchy advanc'd with hasty stride !  
Then Virtue valiantly her cause maintain'd,  
And Heav'n the pow'r of violence restrain'd ;  
The sons of Wealth despis'd the sacred cause  
Of native Glory, — Property, and Laws.  
Nor less the evil blood of faction flow'd  
In vulgar veins, where Poverty abode :  
From East to West, — from Court to Billingsgate,  
Each street produc'd Reformers of the State ;  
Smiths, barbers, tailors, cobblers, all the rout  
Of low mechanic rabble round about,

For *North*, for *Fox*, — for *peace*, for *war* declar'd,  
 With noisy discord, and each other dar'd  
 To bloody battle, bold : — Some swore, some sang  
 Vile party ballads, and each pothouse rang  
 With State-affairs : — Then quarrels ev'ry hour  
 (Fomented by the frothing liquor's pow'r)  
 Invited rude confusion to their aid,  
 And matchless deeds of folly were display'd.

Nor was the plague to *London* all confin'd : —  
 In clouds of smoke, and wafted by the wind,  
 The dire contagion roll'd along the ground,  
 And spread its baneful influence around,  
 Like a thick fog, secluding from the sight  
 Truth's sunshine, and, in shades of murky night,  
 Produc'd a wild fantastic jarring train,  
 The imps of nonsense, to distract the brain ;  
 Peace fled affrighted from the fatal pest,  
 And Discord soon became the rustic's guest.

The growing madness found its easy way,  
 Where noisy drunkenness asserts her sway : —  
 Nor 'scap'd our Heroes' Club. Who shall recite,  
 What quarrels then ensu'd from night to night ;  
 What rude disputes, what fruitless argument  
 Our heroes held ; what time, what breath they spent ;  
 But all in vain ; the phrenzy still increas'd,  
 And Politics disturb'd their yearly feast,  
*Here* Fox was toasted, *there* his party curst ;  
*Here* call'd the best of men, and *there* the worst  
*There* North was prais'd, — the King, — the Government ;  
 All *here* abus'd : — till, violently bent  
 On opposition, both the parties rose,  
 And sharp replies produc'd succeeding blows ;

The glasses rattled, and the purple 'flood  
From broken bottles flow'd, enrich'd with blood.

Our prudent Heroes, to elude the fray,  
Beheld aloof, then homeward wound their way :  
When PLOUGHSHARE, much revolving in his breast,  
Sigh'd as he walk'd, and thus his grief express'd :

“ The evils, neighbour CLODPOLL, we endure,  
“ Are known to you, and need a hasty cure.  
“ How little can these times with those compare,  
“ When we were young, and danc'd at Tewin \* fair !  
“ Our brother Farmers then together met,  
“ And talk'd of business ; — weather, dry or wet ; —  
“ The market-price of corn ; — who plough'd, who sow'd ; —  
“ Whose crops best promis'd ; — who most care bestow'd : —  
“ Good sense all this : — Or, if we tarried long,  
“ Some merry wag would cheer us with a song.

“ Songs were like sermons then.”——‘Tis very true,  
Quoth CLODPOLL, ‘ neighbour, there I think with you :  
‘ And better far I lik'd them.’——“ Well reply'd,”

With smile of approbation, PLOUGHSHARE cry'd :  
“ Fine songs were those ; — the Children of the Wood ;  
“ The Lady's Fall, or valiant Robin Hood ;  
“ The Blind Old Beggar ; famous Chevy-Chace ;  
“ Bold Hosier's Ghost, or Minister's Disgrace :

\* A small village in Hertfordshire, about 25 miles from London, and four from the town of Hertford.—Here Mr. STURTT resided for upwards of five years ; and, at his own expense, instituted a Sunday-school for the instruction of the poor children ; hiring a parlour for that purpose of a farmer's widow, and purchasing easy books adapted to the genius of his pupils. —This undertaking was afterwards patronized and extended by the noble family of the Cowpers, of Cole-green, in the adjoining village of Hertingfordbury : And now, by the appointment of stated superintendants, a daily school is established, and it is hoped that ere long, the shades of ignorance will be entirely dispersed.

" And good old tunes to all. — Oh, how I hate  
 " The gewgaw sounds and shakings which of late  
 " Spoil all our music : — and your oratory's,  
 " Outlandish operas, and singsong stories ;  
 " Sound without words, — for words not understood  
 " Are useless, CLODFOLL, tho' the sense be good.  
 " Then nonsense let them hear." — " True, very true,"  
 Cried CLODFOLL, ' I had rather much hear you,  
 ' Lame Dick and Will the blacksmith join and sing :  
 ' Oft have I heard you make the tap-room ring  
 ' At Bramfield alehouse ; then, with much delight,  
 ' I smook'd my pipe, and merry pass'd the night.'  
 " Ah!" said old PLOUGHSHARE, " but those days are past ;  
 " The days of pleasure cannot always last : —  
 " Before these innovations first took place,  
 " Old England shone unclouded by disgrace :  
 " Her forces then united, claim'd the day ;  
 " For glory then they fought, but now for pay :  
 " Increasing taxes, and increasing loss,  
 " Vexations every day, and all things cross,  
 " Are what we get for blood and money too.  
 " Expended lavishly. — "Twixt I and you  
 " There's something wrong in this." — " Sure as a gun,  
 ' There is,' cried CLODFOLL ; ' and we are undone.'  
 Short silence now ensu'd ; thrice PLOUGHSHARE sigh'd,  
 Then gravely shook his head, and thus reply'd :  
 " Some folks, I fear, my friend, are much to blame :  
 " That plaguy country, — I forget the name, —  
 " Beyond sea tho', — what is it ? — with an *A*  
 " The name begins : — Oh, 'tis America ;  
 " An outland place, — but lost, as I am told,  
 " To us for ever ; — lost, my friend, — or sold,

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“ As some report ; (for I suspect foul play  
“ At home, or we had never lost the day).  
“ Now party broils disturb the country's quiet,  
“ Where noise prevails, and rude intestine riot :  
“ What midnight quarrels in our peaceful Club  
“ Arise of late ! — Our president Squire Grubb \*,  
“ Without respect, tho' Alderman and May'r,  
“ Was pummel'd soundly at last Wetshod fair,  
“ Because he toasted,—To a rebel State,  
“ Confusion!” — ‘ Ay, Tom Butcher broke his pate,’  
Said CLODPOLL ; ‘ and he bled like any pig ;  
‘ Torn was his coat ; he lost both hat and wig.’  
“ Shameful abuse to one so high in fame !  
“ For Grubb, friend CLODPOLL, is an ancient name,”  
(Return'd the orator) : “ If thus they dare,  
“ Insult a grocer and defy the may'r,  
“ What troubles on us may such outrage bring ?—  
“ But one step further leads them to the King.”  
Quoth CLODPOLL ; ‘ That is treason.’ — “ To be sure :  
“ And such diseases call aloud for cure,”

\* The character here represented under the assumed name of *Grubb*, is elsewhere thus humourously but faithfully portrayed by Mr. STRUTT :—“ Old Turnpenny, who near the Royal 'Change collected his plumb, now lives retired in his country-box, and commences gentleman, with equipage and all other contingent necessaries, save only the inbred qualities of the mind : but, destitute of these, gentility sits on him like a ready-made coat purchased of a Monmouth broker, on the back of a ploughman. — — There I saw him come coughing forth in a frosty morning, wheezing, and whistling his dogs along ; having paid for a licence for carrying a gun ; — not that he can shoot, but because it is genteel so to do. — — His lady damie follows him to the door, and wishes him good sport ; but the enormous carcass, swilled with turtle, venison, and choice wine, cannot endure much fatigue : — He whines and whistles, as he goes — — half a mile ; — never comes within sight of a bird to shoot at, but returns to his fire-side, — and talks of the great feats he *will* perform to-morrow.”

Continued **PLOUGHSHARE** :— “ but the rabble still,”  
 “ In spite of justice, work their wicked will,  
 ‘ New scandal broaching, nor by look dismay’d  
 “ Of Wilson’s ministers, tho’ soundly laid.

“ On back and shoulders.”—— ‘ If such punishment  
 ‘ Be not sufficient to restrain the bent  
 ‘ Of evil minds, nor whippings without stint  
 ‘ Correct the manners, then the devil’s in’t ;’  
 Said **CLODPOLL** gravely, while he scratch’d his pate.

“ That they’re not enough,” replied his mate,  
 “ The new-born quarrels which each day infest  
 “ The country round, may bear sufficient test.”——  
 ‘ If stocks and whips cannot keep rogues from riot,  
 ‘ Then hang them all ; and that may make them quiet ;’  
 Cried **CLODPOLL**, with a self-applauding grin.

But **PLOUGHSHARE** answer’d :— “ No, let’s keep within  
 “ Fair compass, neighbour, nor let justice strain  
 “ Prerogative beyond the law, to gain  
 “ Peace on unequal terms : The rogue, tho’ poor,  
 “ Is still a man : his fate let us deplore,  
 “ And spare in mercy more than justice can :  
 “ For, God’s last work, and best of all, was Man.”  
 ‘ But is it possible for you or I

‘ To help these evils, **PLOUGHSHARE**, if we try ?’

Quoth **CLODPOLL**.—— **PLOUGHSHARE** smil’d with conscious pride  
 (Of speech superior ; and again reply’d :—

“ Untutor’d, I have found the ready way  
 “ Which leads to glory :—and I will display,  
 “ In this degen’rate age, my hearty zeal  
 “ For public duty and the common weal ;  
 “ At once I’ll stem the torrent, brave the flood  
 “ Of Faction, and restrain this waste of blood.”

He spake: and CLODPOLL all amaz'd, return'd:—

- ‘ That will be brave indeed ; but I’ll be burn’d  
 ‘ If I know how you’ll order matters so.’  
 “ Then hear, my friend : To London I will go,”  
 (Resum’d the speaker, and with warmth express’d  
 The bold sensations struggling in his breast,)  
 “ To London I will go, and see the King,  
 “ And in his royal ears a peal I’ll ring,  
 “ The voice of truth, at forfeit of my head ;  
 “ A voice whose sound might wake the silent dead!”—

CLODPOLL aghast, with uplift hands and eyes,  
 Half stunn’d with noise, stood shaking with surprise ;  
 And while in silence he express’d his fears,  
 The thund’ring pathos rattled in his ears ;  
 At length, new courage he assum’d, and cry’d,  
 ‘ For ever rest the dead!’ — His friend reply’d : —  
 “ For ever rest their souls! ’tis peace I seek ;  
 “ To curb the mighty, and protect the weak : —  
 “ The King, the Ministers, and Lords of State,  
 “ Know little what *we* suffer now of late,  
 “ By knaves surrounded, who exert their skill,  
 “ With lies on lies, and fawning arts, to fill  
 “ Their purses. Simple Truth dwells not at courts,  
 “ Where self-love sways, and flattery resorts : —  
 “ But when I shall our latent griefs express,  
 “ The King will hear and grant us all redress :  
 “ This foreign war shall stop, when I declare  
 “ The voice of Truth, and warn him to forbear ;  
 “ The people shall rejoice in new-born peace,  
 “ Trade smile again, and taxes all decrease :  
 “ These blessings, CLODPOLL, England soon shall owe  
 “ To *ME* alone.” — ‘ Nay, with thee let *me* go;’

Quoth CLODPOLL: ' Ever steadfast as the Church

' I'll prove, and never leave you in the lurch.'

" 'Tis granted," PLOUGHSHARE cried; " my friend shall join

" To execute the deed; the thought was *mine*

" Alone; *I* claim that honour; 'tis my due:

" The second share, my friend, belongs to you."

' 'Tis all,' cry'd CLODPOLL, ' reason can desire;

' The errant knight art thou, myself the squire:

' 'Tis thine to lead where honour points the way;

' Mine 'tis to follow, — and I will obey.'

He spake; and PLOUGHSHARE grasp'd at once his hand  
With eager joy, and cried: — " We'll save the land:

" Huzza, my boy! the triumph's all our own:

" To-morrow early we will haste to Town.

" Achiev'd our labours, and reform'd the State,

" What honours shall on our return await!

" Our names, in toasts, shall follow Church and King:

" For us shall bonfires blaze, and bells shall ring;

" And songs, to good old measures made, proclaim

" Our bold adventures, and declare our fame

" To future times. Precedence at our Club

" Becomes our due, and equal to Squire Grubb

" We shall be held at Hertford." — " Brave indeed

' All this,' quoth CLODPOLL; ' and if we succeed

' In our bold enterprise, as we desire,

' You may become a knight, and I a squire:

' In deed and truth, his Majesty the King

' Can, if he please, perform so great a thing.'

" He can, and more," said PLOUGHSHARE, " if he will:

" His word is mighty, and can save or kill.

" Whate'er betides, our study is to serve

" The King and Country too: What we deserve



‘ For such brave actions, after-times must show ;  
 “ ’Tis theirs to think, and fit reward bestow.”

He spake: and CLODPOLL, eager to obtain  
 The bright reward, (for his delight was gain,  
 Enquir’d how they should go? — “ We’ll thither ride:  
 “ My cart is large enough,” (his mate replied) ;  
 “ And ready will I have it at my door,  
 “ To-morrow morning, ere the clock strike four.  
 “ Your Sunday’s frock put on; and let your shirt  
 “ Be clean and spruce, your cravat free from dirt;  
 “ Fresh-oil your boots; comb out your wig with care;  
 “ Your best hat brush; and washing do not spare  
 “ To hands and face: For, in our best bedight,  
 “ In order trim and seemly to the sight,  
 “ ’Tis fit we go to Court; where Rich and Great  
 “ We shall behold, and Ministers of State,  
 “ And mighty Lords uncover’d, in a ring  
 “ Stand round the throne, and bow before the King.”

‘ But will they let such folks as you and I  
 ‘ See this fine sight?’ quoth CLODPOLL: ‘ Let me die,  
 ‘ If I neglect to come ere break of day,  
 ‘ Dress’d in my Sunday’s clothes quite spruce and gay:  
 ‘ For, such a show is better worth my care  
 ‘ Than Watton statute, or than Hertford fair.’

Near home they now arriv’d: and both agreed,  
 Udaunted, to perform the mighty deed  
 With prowess join’d, and mutual promise made;  
 Then both shook hands, and, as they parted, pray’d  
 For safe return, with shining honours dight. —  
 ‘ Good night,’ said CLODPOLL.—PLOWERSHARE cried, “ Good night.”

THE  
**Bumpkins' Disaster.**

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PART II.

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*The Council of the Fairies.*

**F**ULL-ORB'D, the splendid Regent of the Night,  
Her journey half perform'd, serenely bright,  
The fertile meadows, dank with dew, survey'd,  
And winding banks in verdant pomp array'd;  
Where ancient *Lea* invites her wanton beams,  
And swells with dimpled pride the ample streams:  
His gushing floods the massy ruins lave  
Of Waltham's fane, and murmur by the grave  
Of royal Harold: — There, his sprite beheld  
The land afflicted by oppressive geld;  
Beheld indignant, when, at midnight hour,  
He left the silent tomb and awful bow'r,

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Encloister'd, and, with slow majestic pride,  
Stalk'd o'er the pastures, and for vengeance cry'd.

The silver Moon oft witness'd to his grief,  
When he arose, and curs'd the ruthless chief  
Whom fortune favour'd, in that dreadful day,  
When England fell, to foreign arms a prey! —  
Why should the hollow cloister hear thy moan?  
The battle was sustain'd by *thee* alone:  
And when the fatal arrow pierc'd thy brain,  
The Nation's hope at once with *thee* was slain!

Such sorrow as superior spirits know,  
The Royal Spectre felt for England's woe,  
When he, the Norman Bastard's triumph saw,  
O'er injur'd justice, piety, and law:  
The barb'rous victor then, with fell disdain,  
On native Freedom bound the galling chain.  
*One* equal action mark'd the tyrant's name; —  
The recreant sons of faction, lost to shame,  
Rewardless and despis'd he sent away,  
Nor shar'd with them the honours of the day.

Rest thou in peace for ever, hallow'd shade!  
The guilty land thy better cause betray'd;  
In blood, the direful error found too late,  
She mourn'd, — but could not shun her wayward fate.

Now thro' the meadows in a lambent flame,  
Involv'd with glitt'ring pomp, the Chieftain came  
Who rules the wand'ring *Fires* :— The Son of *Air*  
He met, who makes the evening gales his care,  
Incites their fury or their rage restrains;  
Bids Zephyrs play, or binds the North in chains,  
When *Oberon* his goblin court invites  
To midnight revel, and the airy sprites

In mead or glade by moonshine dance and play,  
 Nor quit their pastimes till the break of day,  
 Or, warn'd by morning cock to wing their flight,  
 Where day subsides and leaves the rule to night.

To *Breeze*, the wand'ring *Meteor* thus address'd  
 His speech: — "Obedient to the high behest  
 ' Of *Oberon*, com'st thou these dewy meads  
 ' To visit? Here perhaps the monarch leads  
 ' His fairy bands to view the sad remains  
 ' Of *Waltham's* grandeur, and renew the strains  
 ' Of joys long past." — To him the *Sprite* reply'd:

' Those strains of joy with ancient glory died;  
 ' The Court expect I not, but come to meet  
 ' *Hobgoblin Puck*, and from the King retreat  
 ' His presence, three nights hence, within that pile  
 ' Of massy Stones, the wonder of this isle,  
 ' In ancient times by Britain's sons uprear'd,  
 ' Where justice sat at once belov'd and fear'd:  
 ' *Stone-Henge* its name, by Saxon lords impos'd, —  
 ' Its elder title lost when ruin clos'd  
 ' The sacred record, and forbade to fame  
 ' The glories which adorn'd the Briton's name  
 ' In days of yore. — The Court will then assemble there,  
 ' With *Oberon*, the festive rites to share.'

While yet he spake, the jolly Spectre came,  
 And laughing loudly, cried: "Good even, *Flame*:  
 " Friend *Breeze*, well met. — Thro' bog, thro' brake, and brier,  
 " My flight I've urg'd, and left, knee-deep in mire,  
 " A lustful wanton, in her best bedight,  
 " To meet her lover and pollute the night:  
 " Her goatish swain, in yonder ditch o'erthrown,  
 " Begrim'd with mud, his curses vents alone."

So spake the Fiend ; when *Breeze* to him address'd  
 His speech, and signified the king's request.  
 " Tell him I'll come," reply'd the jocund Sprite :  
 " Folly makes mirth ; and mirth is my delight :  
 " On courts attendant, there I find the dame  
 " Her sway exerting, unrestrain'd by shame ;  
 " The sons of pomp to all her whims submit,  
 " And sing, or dance, or cry, as she thinks fit.  
 " What do you think I saw the other night ?  
 " A pastime call'd *King Oberon's Delight* :  
 " A bowl of suds before the monarch's seat  
 " Was brought, and he perform'd the mighty feat  
 " With tubes of grass, and empty bladders blew  
 " To wond'rous size : All these among the crew  
 " Of courtier slaves, with solemn pomp were thrown :  
 " Who caught the bauble, claim'd it as his own :  
 " Stars, garters, ribbands, every one its name  
 " And titled worth receiv'd, to fill the game.  
 " What sport was mine, to see the venal bands  
 " With disappointment grasp their eager hands !  
 " By sudden pressure crush'd, the shining prize  
 " Became a nothing, and escap'd their eyes :  
 " The fools astonish'd, for their loss complain,  
 " Their empty hands extend, and mourn in vain."  
 ' Fye, Spirit, fye!' cried *Breeze* : — ' let truth keep pace  
 ' With words, else empty sounds : do not disgrace,  
 ' By falsehoods multiply'd, thy better sense.  
 ' With varied rank the State cannot dispense ;  
 ' Ev'n ignorance must hold the vote absurd,  
 ' Which rank depresses, and exalts the herd,  
 ' The vulgar herd, for ever led astray,  
 ' Save only when restraint dictates obey :

' But if with truth thy sombre pencil draws  
 ' The outline of our government or laws ;  
 ' If such the picture of the Fairy State ;  
 ' If folly chiefly dwells among the great ;  
 ' Why art thou, son of wisdom, often seen  
 ' At Court, where folly claims the rank of Queen ?'  
 " Dull Sprite," replied the Goblin, " I to Court,  
 " For laughter only with the fools resort :  
 " Ripe harvest claims the sickle ; there I reap  
 " The fruits of folly, — and hold greatness cheap,  
 " Without desert by birth or chance obtain'd,  
 " Unknown to merit, and by vice sustain'd ;  
 " Reason revolts from union so unfit,  
 " While blockheads claim the patronage of wit."  
 So spake the *Son of Laughter* ; and the Chief  
 Of *Ev'ning Gales* retorted thus in brief : —  
 ' If truth with thy assertions can agree,  
 ' We all are fools ; whole judgement dwells with thee.  
 ' Fye, fye, fantastic shadow ! long before  
 ' Thy birth, was Wisdom born. In days of yore,  
 ' She taught her sacred lessons.' — " True," reply'd  
 The *Laughing Goblin* ; " wisdom was the guide,  
 " Time past, long past, at court, while Reason held  
 " Her rank : — But now, by childish pomp expell'd  
 " From hence, with humble Virtue both abide,  
 " By Poverty obscur'd and shunn'd by Pride.  
 " All Wisdom's lessons too, neglected long,  
 " Grow obsolete, and right gives place to wrong ;  
 " Nor is her darling maxim understood, —  
 " To make us *great*, she wills us to be *good*.  
 " Fools, knaves, and sycophants, surround the Throne,  
 " While exil'd Merit stands without, alone,

" Quite disregarded by the venal train,  
 " Who worship wealth and make a god of gain :—  
 " Hence all the evils which arise of late,  
 " And threaten ruin to the Fairy State :  
 " The saucy *Winds*, thy pow'r can scarce restrain,  
 " Rebellion urges to despise the chain ;  
 " The dancing *Meteors* hardly will obey,  
 " When *Flame* commands, and points them out their way.  
 " The adverse goblins all exert their might,  
 " Indignant of controul, and boast their right,  
 " To rule in turn." — ' Peace, peace,' the Courtier cried,  
 Him interrupting ; ' Duty be our guide :  
 ' Eternal railer, say, what praise is due  
 ' To those malignant feats perform'd by you ? —  
 ' Is pinching frowzy wenches in their bed  
 ' Fit sport for spirits ? — or, when goblin-led,  
 ' To tumble some poor mortal in the mire ?  
 ' Puff out the candles, quench the winter's fire ?  
 ' In vulgar games to play ; or, like a dog,  
 ' To bark, or counterfeit a calf or hog ;  
 ' And fright the feeble-minded ; to display  
 ' Thy wond'rous wisdom ! Jesse's grandson, say.'  
 " Malicious Spirit," hastily reply'd  
 The merry Goblin, " why my deeds deride,  
 " When, known to thee, they tend to teach mankind  
 " The worth of Virtue and to mend the mind ?  
 " Vice is the object of my vengeful mirth,  
 " And Sloth, which first gave Poverty her birth :  
 " I love Industry, and assistance lend  
 " Where Labour craves relief ; unseen, extend  
 " To careful housewife oft my bounty too,  
 " And drop a tester in her empty shoe.

" If, Vice chastising and correcting Sloth,  
 " Or adding strength to feeble Virtue's growth,  
 " Myself I please, and summon to my aid  
 " Fantastic fears, the conscience to upbraid  
 " Where guilt abides, — or wake with vain affrights  
 " Lethargic mortals, — and disturb the nights  
 " Of those who sluggishly abuse the day,  
 " And leave unfinish'd work, to follow play ;  
 " Why not indulge my mirth, when oft I find  
 " For mirth fit subject in the vulgar mind ?  
 " Nor by mankind am I esteem'd the less  
 " For all my wayward pranks : mankind confess  
 " My worth with gratitude, and own the blame,  
 " While *Robin Goodfellow* they call my name."

So spake the Goblin ; and to him reply'd  
*Breeze*, smiling : — ' If the cause be justly tried  
 ' Between thyself and man, it must be known  
 ' That fear, not love, makes him such merit own :  
 ' Affrighted mortals dare not be uncivil,  
 ' But worship thee as Indians do the devil,  
 ' Thy malice to appease, — but hate thee worse  
 ' At heart, than fog or mildew, or the curse  
 ' Of pestilence itself.' — Here *Flame* reply'd,  
 Him interrupting ; — " Set this strife aside,  
 " This war of words, which tends to nothing good,  
 " But, broils fomenting, spoils fair brotherhood ;  
 " Nor benefits the state, thine argument  
 " With warmth upheld, O *Breeze* ; no detriment  
 " From Jolly *Robin's* sportful raillery  
 " To it ensues : nor merits it reply  
 " In serious mood ; for loyal both and true  
 " To king and state is *Robin* ; so are you.



" At court, you know full well, the merry elf  
 " Cracks jokes on jokes, nor spares the king himself.  
 " Nor can the evils *Puck* deplores, affect  
 " The Fairy State: 'tis not thro' our neglect  
 " These evils rise, he, if he please, may find;  
 " They all originate among mankind:  
 " Superior orders we perforce obey,  
 " And where the rod's appointed, mark the way:—  
 " Hence tempests rage, and baleful meteors shine,  
 " Portentous omens of some state's decline:  
 " In this apparent misrule, he may trace  
 " The lash of justice on a guilty race;  
 " The warning voice of Heav'n which loudly cries:—  
 " ' Learn hence, mistaken mortals, to be wise,  
 " ' Nor tempt forbearing Mercy to depart;  
 " ' For, Vengeance waits to rend the guilty heart:  
 " ' Vice, though she now may boast of pleasure past,  
 " ' Is destin'd to her native hell at last!' "

' Just is thy reasoning, *Flame*, and well apply'd,'  
 Said *Breeze*: ' for Truth herself is on thy side.  
 ' Let *Puck* reply, if sophistry can find  
 ' Delusive eloquence enough to blind  
 ' Sharp-sighted reason, and with empty sound  
 ' Compel unerring Truth to quit her ground.  
 ' No:—even he, abash'd, must own at last,  
 ' By pow'r superior all his art surpass'd;  
 ' That falsehood fails, when simple truth stands by  
 ' To give his specious arguments the lie.  
 ' But thou hast well advis'd, my gentle friend,  
 ' For us no further idly to extend  
 ' This fruitless contest. — Now the sons of *Air*,  
 ' On ev'ning watch, demand their Chieftain's care.'

This said, with outstretch'd wings he urg'd his flight :  
 ' Farewell,' he cry'd ; and sought the realms of night.

" Fearful of blame for this undue delay,"

Exclaim'd the *Laughing Spectre*, " haste away.

" The Court expects such busy sons of state ;

" Then let obeisance teach thee to be great.

" On none dependent, ever will I hold

" My native freedom dearer far than gold,

" Or all the pomp, parade, or stately show,

" Which pride can ask, or majesty bestow :

" But now to all disputes put we an end ;

" For *Robin* comes a suitor to his Friend.

" A merry game I have in hand to play,

" And need thine aid, dear Goblin, for a day,

" Or two perhaps ; and must not be deny'd."

He spake ; the *streaming Meteor* thus reply'd :

' Be it no treason to the Fairy State ;

' And *Robin* may command me soon or late.'

" What treason, silly elf, was ever found

" In pranks like mine, which all with mirth abound ;

" The scowling traitor, with contracted brow,

" Plots in the dark, and lives the dev'l knows how :

" All mirth he hates, and laughter deems a crime ;

" Ov'r mischief brooding, gives to hell his time.

" More light than air thy friend, and ever gay,

" He loves to sport the jocund hours away.—

" Know then, a Club is held, of great renown

" For news and politics, at *Hertford town*,

" Where noisy nonsense bears the rule supreme,

" Involv'd in clouds of smoke and fetid steam.

" Amid the motley crew, last night, a guest,

" Unseen was I ; — and in the bowls I pres'd

" The juice of herbs distill'd by nicest art,  
 " To stupify the judgement, and impart  
 " Fantastic notions such as best defy  
 " All rule of Reason, and her place supply :  
 " The growing madness, as the glass went round,  
 " Their brains fermented and their senses drown'd.  
 " But as the noxious fumes with fury rag'd,  
 " Oh, how I laugh'd to see the fools engag'd !  
 " What kicks, what cuffs, what sturdy blows prevail'd,  
 " When less substantial arguments had fail'd :  
 " The pow'rful charm supply'd the weak with might,  
 " Embolden'd cowards, and provok'd the fight.  
 " But, two protected as a counter-charm,  
 " For future mirth, have I secur'd from harm ;  
 " Nor suffer'd them, with thoughtless rage, to join  
 " The rude affray and frustrate my design :  
 " A diff'rent madness agitates their mind :  
 " From war retreating, and to peace inclin'd,  
 " Their bosoms swell with hope of future fame,  
 " And they the State excesses to reclaim,  
 " Will undertake : the patriotic fire  
 " Inflames their minds, and stimulates desire  
 " Of great achievement : boldly their complaint  
 " To Majesty itself, without restraint,  
 " They seek to make, and with sagacious speech  
 " Advise the King, and all his Council teach,  
 " This foreign War an evil long has reign'd,  
 " By party broach'd, and prejudice maintain'd : —  
 " To stop its baleful progress and restore  
 " The sweets of Peace, the Heroes will implore  
 " The royal mandate. — Neither there, my Friend,  
 " Shall these Herculean labours find an end :

" The Court itself they'll weed, and fools and knaves,  
 " And fawning sycophants the abject slaves  
 " Of wealth, at once uprooted from the state,  
 " Shall give fair Virtue room to flourish and be great."  
 ' Say, Son of *Mirth*,' the *blazing Meteor* cry'd,  
 ' To what weak heads hast thou thy drugs apply'd,  
 ' And set their madd'ning influence afloat,  
 ' Mischievous mirth by folly to promote?'  
 " No mischief," answer'd *Robin*, " can ensue ;  
 " The Knight *I* will support ; the Squire to *you*  
 " I give in charge : ourselves will personate  
 " The regal form and minister of state ;  
 " The rest, a Fairy Vision shall supply  
 " With courtly grandeur to deceive the eye. —  
 " Then picture to thyself what glorious sport  
 " We may indulge with two great oafs at Court :  
 " Born in a wood, and nurtur'd at the plough,  
 " They never left their native glades till now,  
 " So far advent'ring ; nor of life have seen  
 " What much exceeds the fair on *Tewin Green* :  
 " But their sagacious noddles have I fill'd  
 " With strange conceits, and fantasies instill'd  
 " Chimerical, of Court and Courtly State,  
 " And Splendour which attends upon the Great :  
 " Sure of success in some superior line  
 " The claims of merit, they expect to shine.  
 " *PLOUGHSHARE* my charge is call'd ; thine, *CLODPOLL* nam'd ;  
 " Near neighbours both, and both for friendship fam'd :  
 " Great Agamemnon's son ('twixt I and you)  
 " Found not in Pyladès a mate more true,  
 " Than *CLODPOLL* is to *PLOUGHSHARE*." — ' For thy sake,  
 Reply'd the *wand'ring Fire*, ' I'll undertake

' This merry trick to forward : — all I ask,

' Since small my leisure, is an easy task.'

The Goblin answer'd : " Slow to speak, or think,  
 " Is CLODPOLL, sober, — but when warm'd with drink,  
 " Loquacious like a parrot pleas'd with sound,  
 " He harps on words ; in one continued round,  
 " His nonsense chimes. No more do I require  
 " Of thee than to support the fading fire  
 " Of glory in his breast : Not much of art  
 " Or diligence is needful on thy part ;  
 " On me devolves the labour : — Right or wrong,  
 " For ever runs my active Hero's tongue :  
 " Teeming with words, he flourishes ; and I  
 " Each minute must fresh argument supply,  
 " To give some shadow, at the least, of sense,  
 " Or quaint retort, to aid his eloquence."

' 'Tis well,' the *Meteor* said : ' And I my train  
 ' Dispers'd, with orders where to meet again.  
 ' At night's return my liberty I claim,  
 ' And dedicate the day to mirthful fame.  
 ' The time and place of meeting left to thee,  
 ' Appoint them both and rest assur'd of me,  
 ' Nor doubt but CLODPOLL's spirits I'll sustain,  
 ' And with unusual fancies fill his brain.'

He spake ; and with a smile the mirthful Sprite,  
 Well pleas'd, reply'd : — " Our Heroes both, last night,  
 " Agreed their journey with the break of day  
 " To undertake : Lest unforeseen delay  
 " Should intervene their notions, I'll attend.  
 " By Waltham Cross they pass, and there, my friend,  
 " We'll meet. Till then, farewell." — Nor waited he  
 For *Flame* to answer ; but, replete with glee,

Swift as the lightning shines with sudden glare,  
 He fled away, and pierc'd the yielding air.  
 The streaming Meteor, rising from the plain,  
 Shot through the fogs, and sought his gaudy train.

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*The Irish Echo.*

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WHEN by the willows that the pond o'erhung,  
 In pensive sorrow thus she said, or sung:  
 "Where art thou now, O CLODPOLL?" — *Where, oh where,*  
 Return'd a solemn voice. — "CLODPOLL, forbear  
 "To break my heart: Return, my love, again."  
*Return,* replied the voice, *and ease my pain.*  
 "His manners gentle;" — *person straight and slim,*  
 Was echo'd back; *his dress is neat and trim.*  
 "Not slender is my love, but tall and stout." —  
*He sings and dances:* — "Echo, you are out;  
 "His toes turn inwards, and he cannot dance." —  
*Well-form'd his limbs:* — "No, no:" — *and if perchance*  
*The song invites him* --- "He could never sing," ---  
*His voice is charming, and would please a king.*  
 "Lout's voice is hoarse and rough: but then, 'tis true,  
 "He speaks but little: give him then his due."  
 The voice return'd, *How active!* — "Fy, oh fy!" —  
*And like a hare he runs.* — "Nay, that's a lie,  
 "I'll tell you plainly, he can hardly walk:" —  
*Nor judge, nor counsel can exceed his talk:*  
*Should he but find the King* ---! — "Would I were bang'd  
 "Before that day; for lout would then be hang'd." —  
*The parish all love PLOUGHSARE;* — "What care I?  
 "For CLODPOLL, lovely CLODPOLL, 'tis I die."

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END OF THE SECOND PART.

THE  
**Bumpkins' Disaster.**

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PART III.

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*Clodpoll's Victory, and Retreat.*

**T**HE morning came; and **CLODPOLL**, rous'd from sleep,  
Bethought him how his promise best to keep  
With neighbour **PLOUGHSHARE**: for he knew full well,  
His consort's tongue, like an alarum-bell,  
With ceaseless clamour would his ears assail:  
For, right or wrong, accusom'd to prevail  
By noise alone, all reason she defied,  
And contradiction was her greatest pride:  
No chance had he,—unless by sudden flight  
He could elude the tempest, and his right  
Maintain at distance,—ever to succeed,  
And with his will premis'd accord his deed:—

Experience oft this woeful truth had prov'd,  
 And CLONDPOLL trembled if her tongue but mov'd  
 In shrill-ton'd accents. — Now, resolv'd to creep  
 By stealth from bed, and leave her fast asleep,  
 He gently rose: but rose in vain; for she  
 Had lock'd the closet and secur'd the key,  
 Where all his Sunday clothes, fresh-brush'd and spruce,  
 She carefully repos'd for future use.  
 Sad disappointment! — Now necessity  
 Compell'd him to awake the dame, and try  
 What could by peaceful argument be gain'd;  
 Herself consenting, and the key obtain'd  
 Without a war of words, stood not within  
 The compass of his utmost hope to win.  
 The sleeping war he trembled to arouse,  
 And thus with falt'ring speech address'd his spouse:  
 ' Dear duck, thy loving husband needs thine aid;  
 ' For, in his best apparel all array'd,  
 ' This day a holiday he means to make.  
 ' Awake, my love; the day begins to break.'  
 The snorting dame, disturb'd, from side to side,  
 Not half awake, turn'd yawning, and reply'd:  
 " What do I hear of holiday and clothes?  
 " The fumes of last night's liquor, I suppose,  
 " Not yet dispers'd, are working in thy pate,  
 " And, drunkard, thus emboldens you to prate: —  
 " But to thy daily labours haste thee soon;  
 " Perhaps more sober thou'lt return at noon,  
 " Or you shall hear from me:" — (and in her eyes  
 Now open'd, anger sparkled.) — He replies,  
 ' To London I am going:' — " London! why?"  
 Return'd the swift-tongu'd matron hastily:



" What sudden call have you, I pray, to roam  
 " On wild-goose chase, or why so far from home?"  
 ' With neighbour PLOUGHSHARE, dame, I have agreed  
 ' To serve,' said he, " my country in her need."  
 " To serve thy country!" she reply'd: — " art mad?  
 " PLOUGHSHARE's a fool, and thou art full as bad:  
 " His idle preachments set you all a-gog:  
 " A prating ass is he; a stupid log  
 " Thyself, good man, to listen, and neglect  
 " Your calls at home. — But, beast, canst thou expect  
 " That I will slave and labour like a horse,  
 " While you are spending ---!" — ' Be not, dame, so cross,'  
 Said CLODPOLL humbly, and approach'd the bed,  
 In whisper adding, while he scratch'd his head,  
 ' Our deeds shall gain us honour: ' — " Gain a \*\*\*,"  
 Cried she aloud; " Gain money: — for my part,  
 " I think to plow, sow, reap, and thresh the corn,  
 " Are honours which the farmers best adorn:  
 " These duties amply will reward their pains;  
 " Fools only cherish maggots in their brains."  
 And now the stormy clamour was begun,  
 CLODPOLL foresaw to what a length 'twould run;  
 But, bent on haste, determin'd once for all  
 To urge it on, and weather out its fall,  
 As best he could; — ' I know it is your rule,  
 ' At all events to prove thyself a fool, —  
 ' For ever scolding,' peevishly he cry'd.  
 Amaz'd, the dame provok'd, again reply'd:  
 " A fool indeed! — and, sirrah, were it so,  
 " I did not make myself, I hope, you know: —  
 " But ask the parson, clerk, and parish too,  
 " Which is the greater fool, myself or you? —

“ I'll *fool* you, saucebox : ” — and as thus she spake,  
 Seiz'd on her shoe, the vengeance due to take.  
 But CLODPOLL boldly held her uplift arm,  
 Secur'd the shoe, and sav'd himself from harm :  
 A torrent of abuse was all he gain'd,  
 Yet, hero-like, the toilsome post maintain'd.

Still, time ran on, and, fearful to incur  
 His neighbour's censure by too long demur,  
 He thus courageously resum'd his speech :  
 ‘ 'Tis thine to listen, dame ; 'tis mine to teach ;  
 ‘ Our Justice says, (and surely he's not wrong,)  
 ‘ The very devil's in a woman's tongue : —  
 ‘ But cease this useless clamour ; — I *will* go,  
 ‘ Rest well assur'd, altho' the devil say no.' —  
 “ Go, and be hang'd,” said she, “ the loss is thine ;  
 “ Go, drunkard, spend, and guzzle like a swine ;  
 “ Go as you are too, for your Sunday suit  
 “ You shall not have, to spoil.” — ‘ No more dispute,'  
 Cry'd CLODPOLL, desp'rate : ‘ for thy tongue accurs'd,  
 ‘ Of all the plagues man can endure, the worst,  
 ‘ May run till Doomsday : — for the door I'll break,  
 ‘ Resolv'd to have my garments.' — As he spake,  
 With vengeance to the pannels he apply'd ;  
 His foot the pannels crack'd : — “ Forbear,” reply'd  
 The frighted dame ; “ rude Hogintot, forbear,  
 “ And, savage, spoil thy clothes for what I care.”  
 With floods of tears then from the hiding-place  
 She took the key, and flung it in his face.  
 He, stoic-like, this rude indignity  
 Endur'd with patience, and, without reply,  
 Unlock'd the closet-door, and in his best,  
 Impatient of delay, was quickly dress'd.

Meantime, with ceaseless coil, the wordy strife  
 Half stunn'd his brain. — "What shame," cried she, "a wife,  
 "Like me, so careful, loving, and so true,  
 "Should be neglected by a beast like you ;  
 "Dolt, blockhead, toss-pot, idle, drunkard, go ;  
 "Such stubborn fools shall never want for woe."  
 Then flowing tears and rising sighs suppress'd  
 The growing tempest struggling in her breast.

The momentary interval of peace  
 CLODPOLL, equipt, and eager for release,  
 Without delay embrac'd ; and left the dame  
 Aston'd with grief and overwhelm'd with shame.  
 Blessing his stars, he hail'd propitious fate,  
 And conquest gain'd at such an easy rate.  
 His trusty staff he grasp'd : yet pale affright  
 Urg'd him, tho' victor, on to instant flight.

Rejoic'd at his escape, with haste he strode  
 Along the plain, and sought his friend's abode.—  
 So the poor bird, ensnar'd by human art,  
 Moans in its cage, and views with panting heart  
 The distant woods : Beset around with fears,  
 It pines with grief, and from its food forbears :  
 But if, perchance, restor'd by milder fate  
 To native freedom and its wonted mate,  
 Proud of its liberty, it cleaves the skies  
 With eager joy, and carrols as it flies.

Prepar'd and waiting, CLODPOLL found his friend :  
 Without delay the heroes both ascend  
 The homely car ; — with falt'ring step and slow,  
 Intent on deeds of great renown they go : —  
 Nor stopp'd they till to Waltham Holy Cross  
 They came ; and baited there themselves and horse.

*Fabulous History of Waltham Cross.*

THE ruin'd monument which stood hard by,  
 Of Edward's love, escap'd not CLODPOLL's eye.  
 ' PLOUGHSHARE,' he cry'd, ' what thing is this I see,  
 ' So fairly carv'd, with ladies two or three,  
 ' Within their windows standing?' — — " Can my friend  
 " Be ignorant," said PLOUGHSHARE, " to what end  
 " This goodly structure, *Waltham Cross* by name,  
 " Was built, and wherefore dedicate to fame?  
 " Tho' still existing as it now appears,  
 " There has it stood perchance a thousand years. —  
 " Let us ascend our cart, and deeds of old,  
 " As we jog on, I will to thee unfold."

Without delay, their journey to pursue,  
 They mounted both, and bade their host adieu.  
 The horse, not half so well regal'd as they,  
 Refus'd the hasty summons to obey,  
 Until by application smartly made  
 Of stimulative whip, the founder'd jade  
 Was urg'd to motion, tho' to rest inclin'd,  
 And ambled on, impell'd by smart behind,—  
 But rested oft, as if dispos'd to try  
 His master's patience, or his rage defy.  
 Thrice CLODPOLL yawn'd, and PLOUGHSHARE hemm'd as oft;  
 Survey'd the distant road, and gently cough'd;  
 Then gravely thus began: — " No time, my friend,  
 " Can suit us better: and I now intend  
 " My promis'd information to impart  
 " Of what concerns that ruin'd work of art

" By thee admir'd. A famous book had I,  
 " In ancient print, and much of history  
 " In verse therein contain'd; and I mistake,  
 " Or of this *old* antiquity it spake:  
 " Much of it in my mem'ry still I bear, —  
 " Enough at least to make the story clear:  
 " To give the author's words, my best I'll try,  
 " And what is wanting, carefully supply.  
 " A mighty monarch, valiant, just, and good,  
 " In England rul'd, who oft the Danes withstood:  
 " Conquer'd at length, the pagans cross'd the main  
 " To foreign lands, — perhaps to France or Spain;  
 " Where, with the Heathen, Turk, and Prester Tom  
 " Conjoin'd, they wag'd new wars with Christendom.  
 " Thither our king, with many a hardy knight,  
 " Pursu'd the foe, and there renew'd the fight.  
 " A dreadful-giant from the pagans came,  
 " With haughty stride, and *Colbrand* was his name.  
 " A massy bar of iron, huge and strong,  
 " And, if report say true, full ten feet long,  
 " In his right-hand with ease the monster bore;  
 " His shield was brass, as big as our church-door;  
 " A coat of mail of iron limbs compos'd,  
 " (A large cart-load) his body all enclos'd: —  
 " ' For great Mahomet and my gods come I,  
 " Said he, ' a champion; and your hosts defy: . . .  
 " ' Search all your bands, you Christian dogs, and see  
 " ' If one among you dare encounter me.' ---"

Here CLODPOLL trembling sat, with staring eyes  
 And gaping mouth, expressive of surprise:  
 ' A curse confound the coward!' he exclaim'd;  
 ' Well might the walking steeple be asham'd

' To challenge single men : — for I suppose,  
 ' Ten men at once he could with ease oppose.'  
 " Such men, as men are now, he might indeed,"  
 Return'd his friend : — " But let me now proceed:  
 " Our noble king this answer boldly gave : —  
 " ' The Christian chiefs fear not a Turkish slave ;  
 " ' Thy boasting threats, proud pagan, I despise,  
 " ' And will thy daring insolence chastise :  
 " ' God and Saint George endue my arm with might ;  
 " ' For glory and for Christendom I fight.'  
 " A direful conflict hastily ensu'd,  
 " The champions both, with sweat and blood imbru'd,  
 " Held victory long doubtful, till at length,  
 " The juster cause prevail'd o'er brutal strength ;  
 " The vanquish'd pagan, of his head bereft,  
 " A banquet fit for beasts of prey was left." —  
 CLODPOLL, his joy no longer could contain ;  
 ' Huzza !' he cried, ' Old England's foe was slain !  
 ' Oh, noble king, live long, and long prevail !' —  
 Here, PLOUGHSHARE stopp'd him, and resum'd his tale.  
 " But woe the while ! small joy the victor found,  
 " For venom'd humour rankled in each wound ;  
 " The pagan traitor, with accursed skill,  
 " Had drawn from deadly drugs a juice to kill ;  
 " A latent death, but big with certain fate,  
 " When with the flowing blood incorporate :  
 " And with this mixture had the worthless knight  
 " His mace anointed previous to the fight.  
 " Conquest obtain'd, our monarch to his tent  
 " Retir'd, and for his skilful leeches sent :  
 " The skilful leeches came without delay,  
 " Intent their sovereign's orders to obey ;

" His wounds examin'd, and their cure assay'd : ---  
 " But all in vain their utmost skill display'd ;  
 " The subtle poison thro' each vital part  
 " Work'd on its way towards the monarch's heart.  
 " ' The king must die,' the skilful leeches cry'd ;  
 " ' Our healing med'cines are in vain applied ;  
 " ' His wounds are poison'd ; and no hope remains  
 " ' To save his life or mitigate his pains,  
 " ' Unless perchance so kind a friend be found  
 " ' To suck the mortal venom from each wound,  
 " ' And bravely die, another's life to save,  
 " ' A self-devoted victim to the grave.'  
 " They spake: but all the courtier bands amaz'd,  
 " Stood silent, and upon their monarch gaz'd ;  
 " Yet no one offer'd, at so dear a rate,  
 " To save their monarch from approaching fate." ---  
 " No, I'll be sworn,' said CLODPOLL ; ' nor would I,  
 " Thank-you for nothing, such strange fancies try :  
 " Kings, knights, and heroes, what are they to me,  
 " That I should die for them? — will they agree  
 " To die in turn? — not they: — for still we find,  
 " The present life is sweet to all mankind.'  
 " ' Who doubts all this?' the orator reply'd: —  
 " But interrupt no more. — The monarch's bride,  
 " Fair Rosamunda, England's stately queen,  
 " With such affection as is seldom seen,  
 " Claim'd all the glory to effect the cure,  
 " Her lord to save, and all his pains endure :  
 " Fearless of death, her life she freely gave,  
 " And courted, for his sake, an early grave.  
 " But who can paint the sorrow which oppress'd  
 " The monarch's soul, and heav'd within his breast,

“ When he reviv'd, and saw his beauteous bride,  
“ All pale and wan, expiring by his side!  
“ She grasp'd his hand, and all she said was this ;  
“ ‘ Farewell, dear lord !’ and strove his hand to kiss,  
“ Then clos'd her lovely eyes, to wake no more,  
“ And left the king, his consort to deplore!  
“ Her corpse, embalm'd at cost immensely great,  
“ Was hither brought, with solemn pomp and state,  
“ From pagan country, in her native land  
“ To be entomb'd : such was the king's command : —  
“ And where the body rested on its way,  
“ His gratitude for ever to display,  
“ In honour of his Queen he built a Cross  
“ Like that we saw, — a token of his loss.”

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END OF THE THIRD PART.



THE  
**Bumpkins' Disaster.**

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PART IV.

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*Absurdity of Omens.*

**THE** warning voice of Fate let none despise,  
But learn from others' evils to be wise :  
Had our two Heroes due attention paid  
To this sage maxim, they at home had staid,  
Nor rush'd on dangers which beset their way.  
Their guardian sprites were absent for the day,  
And goblins all averse to peace, laid wait  
To stop their progress and disturb the state.

When mighty Cæsar in the senate fell,  
And Ammon's conquering son bade life farewell,  
Portentous omens fill'd both earth and sky : —  
What less can Nature do when heroes die ?

A state in danger bids the thunder roll,  
 And earthquakes shake the world from pole to pole ;  
 Tempestuous huricanes and direful storms,  
 Winds, rains, and floods, and death in all its forms,  
 Or blazing comet with its baleful train,  
 Forebode some tyrant born, or monster slain.

Slept Nature then, when danger had prepar'd  
 His net, and both our worthies were ensnar'd?  
 No ; Nature slept not ; warning prodigies,  
 And frequent tokens, like so many spies,  
 Declar'd approaching harm. — Thrice in the night  
 CLODPOLL awak'd, and shiver'd with affright :  
 Of crawling snakes he dream'd, which round his bed  
 Assembled, and a ghost without a head.  
 Three drops of blood, when PLOUGHSHARE first arose,  
 At equal intervals fell from his nose :  
 Thrice mew'd the cat ; a raven, kept hard by,  
 Croak'd thrice aloud ; and thrice did crickets cry.  
 A magpie chatter'd, in his cage confin'd ;  
 A teeming bitch survey'd them thrice, and whin'd.  
 The morning dram, by ancient usage, due  
 To belly, CLODPOLL claim'd, for ever true  
 To belly's call : — — Soon as the glass was fill'd,  
 By chance 'twas broken, and the liquor spill'd !  
 Thrice three times PLOUGHSHARE sneez'd, and stumbled o'er  
 The rising threshold of the tap-room door. —  
 " Bad luck to both," a passing fish-drab cry'd,  
 As they came forth. Her comrade thus reply'd :  
 ' Why stay they not at home?' — Unheeded pass'd  
 These omens all ; and daughter Voice at last,  
 Some fav'ring sage, like those in days of yore  
 By story fam'd, well skill'd in wisdom's lore,

The Heroes' friend, attendant to translate  
From various prodigies the Voice of Fate,  
They now requir'd ; — or from her native cell,  
Deep in a wood embowr'd, or shady dell,  
Some ancient beldam vers'd in magic rite,  
Soothsaying hag, or fate-foretelling sprite,  
(Themselves unskill'd in knowledge to explain  
Presaging signs and mysteries,) in vain  
To them unfolded. — Omens may alarm  
The mind with bootless fears of future harm ;  
But, like delusive fires which shine by night,  
They shew a feeble transitory light  
Unstable as the veering gusts of wind,  
Sufficient only to mislead the mind.  
While ignorance or folly take the reins,  
And bind in superstition's doleful chains  
Suspended judgement, reason they defy  
And give alone to common sense the lie :  
But what is counsel worth, at any rate,  
Not understood, or, understood too late ?  
Why then should mortal wight so oft complain,  
Affray'd by trifles, and perplex his brain,  
By such weak means expectant to explore  
The depths of Fate, or burst the awful door  
Of vast Futurity ? One God made all :  
To Him the good are equal, great or small. —  
A beggar born, or mighty monarch slain,  
Have equal int'rest in the winds and rain :  
The light'nings blaze, the thunders rend the sky,  
As oft when humble sons of bondage die,  
As when the haughty tyrants of mankind,  
Weak puling infants, to the future blind,

First see the light. Why then, what many claim,  
 Confine to one? or add to *Cæsar's* fame  
 The glory, that, before his worship died,  
*Grimalkin's* motley brood thrice three times cry'd ;  
 That swine did grunt, and hungry lions roar'd ;  
 While gliding spectres, to this world restor'd,  
 With loud alarming speech and fearful cries,  
 Foretold of Brutus and his great emprise ?

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### *Parade Adventure.*

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ON the *Parade*, all powder'd spruce and fine,  
 Our Heroes found the soldiers in a line :  
 The drums were beating ; and the merry fife  
 Full loud and shrill, pleas'd CLODPOLL to the life :  
 Nor less was PLOUGHSHARE with delight inspir'd,  
 When, first, the troops approach'd him ; then retir'd ;  
 Then subdivided, overspread the plain ;  
 Now swift, now slow ; and clos'd at length again.

Their rustic signs of joy a sharper saw,  
 Chief of a band obnoxious to the law.  
 He nodded to his train ; observ'd awhile ;  
 And then approach'd the heroes with a smile.  
 " Good morrow, friends," said he ; " a famous show  
 " Is here exhibited : Like this, I trow,

"Your country none affords:" — 'But, on my soul,  
 'It does,' cried CLODFOLL: 'and, I'll bet a bowl,  
 'Much better too, my neighbour here, and I,  
 'Have often seen (I scorn to tell a lie):  
 'Dost know Saint Alban's? may be not: but there  
 'We've seen reviews, and shows at Hertford fair.  
 'My ploughman Tom for a *malicious* man  
 'Serv'd in my stead, (deny the truth who can);  
 'And tho'ff we be not dress'd indeed so fine  
 'As you, we know at least that *swine are swine.*'  
 "No doubt," reply'd the sharper, "for, 'tis clear,  
 "That wisdom dwells elsewhere as well as here:  
 "She flourishes full oft in humble soil,  
 "Supports the rustic, and beguiles his toil.  
 "To this great city tho' myself confin'd,  
 "A country life far better suits my mind:—  
 "But business must be done, because, they say,  
 "*While the sun shines, 'tis time to make your hay.* —  
 "Some matters of importance, I suppose,  
 "Have brought ye hither: How with us time goes,  
 "Yourselves to witness; or perchance to learn  
 "The price of stocks; or each insure his barn?"  
 'None of these reasons, truly, will I own,'  
 Quoth PLOUGHSHARE, 'brought my friend and me to town.  
 'Need we, to know the price of *stocks*, have come  
 'So long a journey from our native home?  
 'John Oakley could inform us, well I ween,  
 'Who made those new that stand on *Tewin Green*:  
 'Our barns are all insur'd: and for the rest,  
 'Time goes, we judge, but badly at the best.—  
 'But tell me, sir, for I suppose you can,  
 'Who is that gallant well-dress'd gentleman,

' Bedizen'd out with lace of gold so fine?  
 ' See, where he walks at distance from the line.' —  
 ' Some royal prince, or duke, no doubt, or knight,  
 ' He is, and come, like us, to see the sight?'  
 Cried CLODFOLL, interposing. — To restrain  
 The bursting laugh, and seriously maintain  
 His grave deportment, cost their new-made friend  
 No little pains : yet, fearful to offend,  
 Demurely thus he with a smile reply'd :  
 " Do you not see a trumpet by his side ?  
 " For, now he turns, you may." — ' Aye, that I do,'  
 Said CLODFOLL; ' and mayhap, 'tis silver too !'  
 " All solid silver 'tis, be well assur'd ;  
 " The best and finest that could be procur'd ;"  
 Return'd the stranger : — " To a noble band,  
 " The King's own body-guard, I understand  
 " He's trumpeter." — ' A trumpeter !' exclaim'd  
 The Bumpkins both : and PLOUGHSHARE, half ashamed  
 Of his mistake so gross, cast down his eyes  
 In silence : but his mate, without disguise,  
 Express'd his feelings : ' What a noble place  
 ' Is London town, where trumpeters in lace,  
 ' Are fine as kings ! — How much, I wonder tho',  
 ' His trumpet cost? five pounds perchance, or so !'  
 He spake ; and PLOUGHSHARE in a pet reply'd :  
 ' How strangely is thy judgement misapplied !  
 ' Dost thou not see, thro' all this thin disguise  
 ' Of dazzling pomp, wherein our ruin lies?  
 ' Well at our taxes may we all repine,  
 ' When men like him are dizen'd out so fine ;  
 ' At our expense 'tis done : let then, my friend,  
 ' Your wonder, in just indignation end.' —

" Well spoken, Farmer," interrupting, cried  
 The stranger: " Truth herself is on thy side: --  
 " But see, the Guards are marching now away  
 " From hence, and will return no more this day:  
 " Yet where they go, if you will credit me,  
 " A finer show than this remains to see,  
 " When all together in the Palace-yard  
 " They meet, and there relieve the former guard;  
 " With music far surpassing this we hear,  
 " And better chosen to delight the ear."

The Bumpkins star'd, and both at once express'd,  
 With eager joy, their wish to see the rest:  
 The stranger urg'd them to avoid delay,  
 And kindly pointed out the nighest way: —  
 " Along that walk, embower'd with many a tree,  
 " Go with the crowd straight forward, till you see  
 " A spacious outlet to the right inclin'd;  
 " Turn there, and at the farther end you'll find  
 " A narrow passage somewhat dark and long,  
 " Thro' which you may, escaping all the throng,  
 " Pass safely onward to the Palace-yard,  
 " And there arrive some time before the Guard.  
 " Important business calls me now elsewhere;  
 " But yet I'll do my best to meet you there."

With many thanks, the rustics on their parts  
 Express'd the warm effusion of their hearts.  
 On his advice determin'd to depend,  
 They bless'd their stars which gave so kind a friend.  
 " Adieu, my lads," he cried; and smiling, bow'd;  
 Then turn'd with haste, and mingled with the crowd.  
 Five dauntless sons of rapine, whom no law  
 Could curb, nor lash of justice keep in awe,

He from the gang selected : thro' the street  
 They posted all, his rustic friends to meet  
 In the dark passage, where, retir'd from day,  
 The fraudful scene of future action lay :  
 And there arrang'd, were ready for the game;  
 When, out of breath, full speed the Farmers came.  
 " Stop, stop!" one ruffian cried ; " where would you go?"—  
 ' Straight forward, sir, to see the royal show.'  
 " Stand back, you oafs!" another rogue reply'd ;  
 And push'd and jostled them from side to side.  
 Three in the front oppos'd, and three behind :  
 For help the Bumpkins roar'd ; but none could find.  
 CLODFOLL surrounded, grunted like a pig ;  
 Jamm'd to the wall, he lost both hat and wig :  
 But PLOUGHSHARE, nearer to the light, espy'd  
 His new acquaintance ; — " Help, my friend," he cry'd ;  
 " Assist us now ; for by an host of foes  
 " Are we assail'd, unable to oppose."  
 ' Friend! villain?' said the sharper ; ' friend to thee!  
 ' Some thief perchance thou art, unknown to me.'  
 " To thee unknown!" said PLOUGHSHARE, with surprise :  
 " How much this evil world abounds with lies!  
 " By your advice, we came: — For pity's sake,  
 " Some soldier call at least, our part to take." - - -  
 " Give back, clodhopper, or I'll break your pate;"  
 Return'd the thief : " This is no place to prate :  
 " Back to your farms again, like blockheads, go ;  
 " Or come another day to see the show :  
 " A finer sight, my precious numaculls, still  
 " May here be seen to-morrow, if ye will :  
 " But, if with this contented ye shall be,  
 " Farewell, dear clowns, farewell ; remember me."



He spake; and with his gang, in fierce array,  
 Rush'd forward, and the gath'ring crowd gave way:  
 The Farmers both, extended on the ground,  
 Lay overthrown, and cast their eyes around;  
 Roaring for help, *Thieves! Murder! Rogues!* they bawl'd  
 With all their might, and for assistance call'd:

' Where are the soldiers? where are all the guard?

' We're robb'd and plunder'd in the Palace-yard!

' Speak, friend,' said one, ' what's all this fuss about?'—

“ Behold our pockets both turn'd inside out;

“ Our watches are purloin'd, and, more than that,

“ My pocket-book is lost:”— ‘ My wig and hat

‘ Are gone,’ quoth CLONPOLL, and, I swear 'tis true,

‘ Bought at last fair, they both were good as new:

‘ But, worst of all, how shall I to my wife

‘ Excuse my loss? she'll lead me such a life

‘ At my return.’ --- “ Be comforted, my friend;

“ To all these evils we shall find an end,”

Reply'd his mate: “ our just complaint we'll bring,

“ Without demur, and lay before the King.

“ When he shall learn that, in his own court-yard,

“ Such deeds are done, he'll hang, at least, the guard

“ For their neglect: nay, I can promise more,

“ Our losses he most amply will restore:

“ Let hope of future good restrain our grief,

“ For, rest assur'd, we're certain of relief:

“ No more by trifles let us be misled;

“ For pomp and state, we'll seek the fountain-head.”

CLONPOLL, attending little to his speech,

Cried, in a pet:— ‘ No longer stand to preach:

‘ Back to our inn without delay let's go;

‘ And may the devil take another show!’

This said, in silence thro' the gazing throng,  
 With pensive steps they slowly mov'd along :—  
 But as around their path the concourse press'd,  
 CLODPOLL's bald pate excited many a jest.  
 The inn at last they reach'd, in woeful plight,  
 Beamear'd with dust, and quaking with affright.

This dire disaster, pregnant with delay,  
 Their great emprise retarded for the day ;  
 Nor, till the soul-enlivening dram was brought,—  
 (Source of new courage, and the spur to thought,)  
 Could they the impulse of their fears restrain,  
 Or cease complaining ; though complaints were vain.  
 The sov'reign juice their drooping hearts reviv'd ;  
 And many methods were by both contriv'd  
 To raise, without much stir, a small supply  
 Of present cash, their wants to remedy.  
 PLOUGHSHARE at length bethought him of a friend,  
 Some distance off, on whom he might depend.  
 To him, with joint consent, without delay,  
 He went ; and there detain'd, he spent the day :  
 With pockets lin'd afresh, in merry plight,  
 He left the bottle, and return'd at night.—

---

*Ploughshare's Adventure with the Cobbler.*

—Much had he drunk ;— and, in the bladder pent,  
 The stimulative spirits strove for vent :  
 A secret place for ease he sought around :  
 And one convenient for the purpose found,—

THE BUMPKINS' DISASTER.

47

A corner penthouse starting from the wall,  
A *Cobler's* mansion, and yclep'd his *stall*. —  
This ancient dwelling, patch'd and out of form,  
And full of chinks, had weather'd many a storm.  
Within, intent on business, sat the blade,  
*Crispin* his name, and *mending* was his trade.  
A candle double-wick'd, new trimm'd and bright,  
Supply'd the artist with a second light.

Here *Ploughshare*, by necessity constrain'd,  
Took up his stand, and Nature's cause maintain'd.  
A crevice long and large, by him unseen,  
Was opposite, --- and, all at once, between  
The op'ning, on the candle rush'd the tide;  
It hiss'd indignant, while its glory died.  
The light extinguish'd, *Crispin* with surprise,  
Star'd all aghast, and upward cast his eyes,  
The cause exploring: --- Dreadful then to tell!  
O'er head and face the inundation fell,  
A flood obscene, and filthy to his smell!  
Like *Polypheme*, depriv'd at once of sight,  
He roar'd for succour and the guards of night;  
Invok'd in vain: — Unconscious of offence,  
The Farmer still continu'd to dispense  
His favours from without. — “ What! in my face!”  
Enrag'd, cried *Crispin*; “ impudent and base,  
“ To point thy filthy streams, dog! villain! rogue! —  
“ Some other place more fit to disembogue  
“ Could'st thou not find? — By all that's good and great,  
“ If thou escap'st not, I will crack thy pate,  
“ And, in return for this unseemly flood,  
“ I'll set afloat a deluge of thy blood!”

Vengeance he vow'd at hazard of his life,  
 The door unbarr'd, with lapstone and with knife  
 He rush'd abroad, but not till PLOUGHSHARE found  
 Himself th' aggressor, and forsook his ground.  
 The *Cobler* saw him making swift retreat,  
 And follow'd eagerly : for to his feet  
 Revenge, a pest on mischief ever bent,  
 Without intreaty her assistance lent.  
 He bellow'd as he ran, with all his might,  
 To raise a mob and intercept the flight  
 Of PLOUGHSHARE, not unhopeful of success ;  
 For ground he gain'd, and thro' the gath'ring press,  
 The frighted Farmer could not work his way ;  
 Unus'd to crowds, and fearful of affray,  
 He push'd, he jostled, doubled, turn'd, and cross'd,  
 And, still impeded, gave up all for lost.  
 The *Cobler* rais'd his arm, the stone to throw,  
 And aim'd at PLOUGHSHARE's head the vengeful blow.  
 Then had he fall'n perchance, — but milder fate  
 Repell'd approaching death : — To make him great,  
 His guardian spirit, through the shades of night,  
 Came, warn'd by danger, and secur'd his flight.  
 A mastiff's bulky form, with flaming eyes,  
 The elf assum'd, and, mask'd in this disguise,  
 Rush'd through the mob : --- aghast the noisy crew  
 Beheld the barking fury, and withdrew :  
 His grisly shape and monstrous jaws display'd,  
 The stoutest heart among them all, affray'd :  
 Free passage gain'd, the *Cobler* he assail'd  
 With force resistless ; and at once prevail'd.—  
 The vanquish'd hero of the last, o'erthrown,  
 Stretch'd on the pavement, vented many a groan ;

But, as too oft we find it is decreed,  
Misfortune shall misfortune still succeed ;  
His sufferings ended not with this defeat ;  
The lap-stone he let fall across the street :  
It swiftly roll'd, and bounding, as it pass'd,  
Upon a cellar-window dropp'd at last,  
Where a rude wight his habitation made ;  
And greens he sold, --- but thieving was his trade.  
The crushing ruin wak'd ten thousand fears,  
While broken glass flew all about his ears :  
Aston'd he sat, by conscious guilt dismay'd,  
Stern justice dreading, — justice long delay'd :  
Whips, fetters, gibbets, in succession rise,  
And forms fantastic float before his eyes.  
A knife he grasp'd, by desperation led ;  
His matted locks rose upright on his head :  
Appall'd his heart, with agitated mind,  
He cast an eager anxious look behind :  
Danger appear'd not, and returning thought  
New vigour to suspended judgement brought :  
Her pow'rs she re-assum'd ;— the waning light  
He seiz'd, and search'd the cause of his affright :  
The pond'rous stone upon the floor he found,  
And fragments of the casement scatter'd round.  
Indignant shame excited in his breast  
Remorseless rage, and pride his fears suppress'd ;  
He curs'd the feelings which betray'd his heart,  
By conscience wounded, to confess the smart :  
The pow'rs of hell itself he set at nought ;  
Survey'd the damage, and, with vengeance fraught,  
The street ascending, *Crispin* he espy'd  
Just rising from the ground, with blood bedied. —

" Who threw the stone?" cry'd he. — ' I best can tell,  
 Return'd the *Cobler* ; ' from my hands it fell,  
 ' And harmless fell ; mischance ordain'd it so :  
 ' The rogue escap'd, at whom I aim'd the blow.'  
 " Escap'd, thou dog ! escap'd by chance from thee ?  
 " Was then the threaten'd evil aim'd at me ?"  
 Exclaim'd the other : — " and dar'st thou assert,  
 " That broken windows are to me no hurt ?  
 " What demon tempted thee, say, idle knave,  
 " My indignation unprovok'd to brave ? —  
 " But you shall pay severely for your fun,  
 " Be well assur'd of that, before we've done."  
 He ended ; and, ere *Crispin* could reply,  
 With foot and fist beset him furiously.  
 The watch, a second time the *Cobler* call'd : —  
*Watch ! watch !* as loud his fierce opponent bawl'd.  
 The watchmen came ; and thus the thief began :  
 " My window is destroy'd, — and by this man :  
 " Himself confess'd, at me, with foul intent,  
 " The stone he cast, on bloody purpose bent :  
 " Nor can the evil-minded caitiff say,  
 " (I dare his worst,) that I began the fray ;  
 " Offence I gave not : — take him then in charge,  
 " And I'll explain my damage more at large."  
 Before the justice, trembling *Crispin* stood ;  
 The charge he heard ; then swore, by all that's good,  
 He was not guilty ; and, with solemn face,  
 To prove the truth, related all the case.  
 A simple tale, unvarnish'd o'er by art,  
 He told, the genuine dictates of his heart :  
 The gaping crowd, with shouts and varied cries,  
 Express'd applause, and laughter rent the skies.

The sons of justice, in behalf of peace,  
By pity mov'd, requested his release; —  
In vain requested : for the robber's soul,  
To hell devoted, felt no soft controul  
Of tender passions: mercy dwelt not there;  
But vengeance, hatred, malice, and despair.  
With imprecations blasphemous and loud,  
He curs'd the watchmen and defy'd the crowd;  
Insisted on full restitution made  
For damage done; nor, till the whole was paid,  
Would set the Còbler free. — — Meantime, intent  
On flight, the *Farmer*, finding none prevent,  
His speed exerted;— and when he had pass'd  
The crowd, took courage: Looking back at last,  
He saw the wild confusion from afar,  
And wonder'd what provok'd the unknown war;  
Or why the fury who pursu'd his flight,  
Stopp'd short at once, and vanish'd from his sight.  
Pleas'd with the unexpected turn of fate,  
He safely reach'd his friend at last, though late.

END OF THE FOURTH PART.

THE

# Bumpkins' Disaster.

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## PART V.

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### *Visit to Saint James's. †*

\* \* \* \* \*

—AND they were told, that twelve o'clock at noon,  
Was proper time, and not at all too soon,  
To see the King : nor doubted he but they  
Might find him at Saint James's any day.

Full flush'd with hope, they sally'd from the inn,  
Defying danger, deathless fame to win;  
The Park avoiding, where, like fiends of hell,  
The thieves beset them : — Posting down Pall-Mall,  
They reach'd Saint James's, and with cautious eye  
Peep'd thro' the gate, in order to descry  
If all were safe within : Safe all appear'd ;  
The mob was gone, and nothing to be fear'd

† The abrupt commencement of this fifth Part of our Bumpkins' adventures renders a brief explanation necessary. — Undaunted by the various mishaps that had befallen them on the preceding day, PLOUGHSHARE and his friend CLODFOLL, still determining to prosecute their grand enterprize, address their enquiries to the landlord of the inn where they had slept over night, at what time and place they should be most likely to meet with the King. The host instructs them as above related.



Obstructed their free passage. Boldly then  
 They enter'd both, and, like courageous men,  
 Look'd bluff and big while they the yard survey'd,  
 The Guards on duty, and the flag display'd :  
 But most the whale-bone their attention claim'd. —  
 ' Tell me,' quoth CLODPOLL, ' what the beast is nam'd,  
 ' That had such bones, so plaguy large and long ?  
 ' No horse was ever half so big or strong.'  
 His friend reply'd : " The elephant, I'm told,  
 " Has teeth like this, worth near their weight in gold :  
 " But if no tooth, — for I bethink me now,  
 " The rib perchance it is of that *Dunn Cow*,  
 " In days of yore by Guy of Warwick slain,  
 " As histories report, on Dunmow Plain ;  
 " And to the king a rib the champion sent ;  
 " Who plac'd it here a lasting monument  
 " Of Guy's victorious fight."— With staring eyes  
 And uplift hands, expressive of surprise,  
 CLODPOLL enquir'd, ' Who was that famous Guy ?  
 ' A giant ?'— " No; a man like you and I ;"  
 Return'd his friend ; " but in the battle skill'd,  
 " Giants he fought and dragons often kill'd. — —  
 " But more important matters now require  
 " Our care, my friend ; and first, let us enquire,  
 ' Where in this spacious mansion may be found,  
 " The King in state with all his lords around ?"  
 A centinel on duty stood hard by ;  
 The Farmers' speech he heard, and made reply,  
 (His hat first touch'd) : " Your honours' worships may  
 " See all the rooms of state, and rich display  
 " Of swords, of pistols, bayonets, and guns,  
 " In order plac'd like moons, and stars, and suns."

Pointing his hand : " Ascend those stairs," he cry'd,  
 " And at the top you'll find a faithful guide."

They doff't their hats with thanks, and left their friend,  
 And, as advis'd, with haste the stairs ascend.

The anti-chamber enter'd, they espy'd  
 The arms in various forms, and found the guide.

They saw with wonder; nor were less amaz'd,  
 When round the rooms of state they wildly gaz'd.  
 The throne enrich'd with gold, and canopy  
 With art ennobled, first caught CLODPOLL's eye.

' What wond'rous sight is this? say, PLOUGHSHARE, say :

' Half-tester bedstead ne'er so rich and gay

' Saw I before! Four posts there are to mine;

' Yet is it not, in truth, one half so fine!"

So spake the bumpkin. — With a smile, the guide  
 Survey'd them both, and quickly thus reply'd :

' This is the chamber where, on days of court,

' The Nobles to his Majesty resort;

' And that which but a bedstead seems to thee,

' Is call'd the *Throne*. — the King, and only he,

' Is seated there.' — " Why, that's the very thing

" We want to see, my friend ; where is the King?"

Cried PLOUGHSHARE, interrupting; — "'tis high noon :

" Will not the King and Court assemble soon ?

" With him our business is, a tale to tell

" Shall please his Honour's Highness passing well :

" And good advice, I trust, we shall not spare

" Of mighty matters, that deserve his care."

' Half craz'd at least are both,' — bethought the guide,  
 While PLOUGHSHARE stalk'd about with conscious pride,  
 At CLODPOLL winking, who, with vacant grin,  
 In silence nodded. — " Is the King within?"

Continu'd he: " for we his Worship's Grace  
 " Must see in haste, and talk with, face to face.  
 " Charg'd with affairs we come of greatest weight;  
 " Important matters which concern the State:  
 " The King himself we seek, without restraint  
 " To lay before his Grace our just complaint;  
 " Expose the source from which great evils flow;  
 " For most we feel, and best the grievance know."  
 With stifled laugh, the gentleman reply'd:  
 ' Brave man of worth, your country's greatest pride,  
 ' Who with undaunted courage, for her sake,  
 ' Such bold adventures dar'st to undertake:  
 ' For you, shall future fame the laurels twine,  
 ' The bells shall ring, and conduits run with wine,  
 ' And ancient glory fade eclips'd by thine.'

}

\* \* \* \* \*

[Some Yeomen entering the room, habited in their gold-laced coats,]

Old CLODPOLL, frighted, ran full hastily  
 Behind his comrade, and aloud did cry:  
 ' His Honour's gracious Majesty himself  
 ' Is coming out! Bow down, thou silly elf;  
 ' Down humbly on your knees as I do now,  
 ' And doff your hat, and make a proper bow.'  
 Down PLOUGHSHARE dropp'd at once upon his knees;  
 " May it," says he, " your Royal Highness please,  
 " In gracious sort, with truth to answer me:  
 " The King I seek; pray tell me, art thou he?"

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